



A NEW  
VOYAGE & DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
ISTHMUS OF AMERICA

BY  
LIONEL WAFER

Surgeon on Buccaneersing Expeditions  
in Darien, the West Indies, and the Pacific  
from 1680 to 1688

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WITH  
WAFER'S SECRET REPORT (1698)  
AND  
DAVIS'S EXPEDITION TO THE  
GOLD MINES (1704)

Edited, with Introduction  
Notes and Appendices, by  
L. E. ELLIOTT JOYCE

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bridle one of them, upon whose Back two of the lustiest Men would ride at once round the Island, to drive the rest to the Fold. His ordinary Pace is either an Amble or a good Hand-gallop; nor does he care for going any other Pace, during the time his Rider is upon his Back. His Mouth is like that of a Hare; and the Hair-lip above opens as well as the Main-lips, when he bites the Grass, which he does very near. His Head is much like an *Antelope*, but they had no Horns when we were there; yet we found very large Horns, much twisted, in the form of a Snail-shell, which we suppos'd they had shed. They lay many of them scattering upon the Sandy-bays. His Ears resemble those of an Ass, his Neck small, and resembling a Cammels. He carries his Head bending, and very stately, like a Swan; is full-chested like a Horse, and has his Loyns much like a well-shap'd Grey-hound. His Buttocks resemble those of a full-grown Deer, and he has much such a Tail. He is Cloven-footed like a Sheep, but on the inside of each Foot has a large Claw, bigger than ones Finger, but sharp and resembling those of an Eagle. These Claws stand about two Inches above the Division of the Hoof; and they serve him in climbing Rocks, holding fast by whatever they bear against. His Flesh eats as like Mutton as can be. He bears Wool of 12 or 14 Inches long upon the Belly; but 'tis shorter on the Back, shaggy, and but inclining to a Curl. 'Tis an innocent and very serviceable Beast, fit for any Drudgery. Of these we killed forty three; out of the Maw of one of which I took thirteen *Bezoar-stones*,<sup>1</sup> of which some were ragged, and of several Forms; some long, resembling Coral; some round, and some oval; but all Green when taken out of the Maw. Yet by long keeping they turn'd of an Ash-colour; and I have some of them now by me.

The *Spaniards* told us, That these Creatures are extraor-

<sup>1</sup> Bezoar-stones, still prized in Wafer's day for supposed medicinal powers, were before the discovery of America obtained from the organs of various ruminants of Asia; they are formed by secretions. High prices were paid for fine stones, and a few scrapings, powdered into wine and drunk, formed a sovereign cure. When similar stones were found by the Spaniards in the bodies of animals of the New World, a brisk trade began; the bezoar remained an article of commerce until about the end of the eighteenth century.

dinarily serviceable to them at the Mines of *Potosi*, (which lie a great way up in the Country) in bringing the Silver from thence to the Cities that lie toward the Sea; between which Cities and the Mines are such cragged Ways and dangerous Precipices, that it were almost impossible for any man, or any other Beast to carry it. But these Sheep being laden, and led to the Precipices, their Master leaves them there to themselves for above sixteen Leagues; and never meets them, till he himself has also fetch'd a Compass about 57 Leagues round. Thus their sureness of Foot consists solely in their aforesaid Claws, by which they hold themselves so fast upon the least Footing, that they can go where no other Beast can. The *Spaniards* also inform'd us, That at a City they named, which has no Water within a League of it, these Beasts, being bred up to it, were wont to be laden with two Jars, like Panniers, upon their Backs, and away they would go, without Guide or Driver; and when they came to the River, would lie down, and rowle themselves in the Water until both the Jars were full; and then, of their own accord, would return home with their Water. The *Spaniards* added, That this Creature will not nor can be forc'd to work after Day-light. And we found them obstinate enough; for when once lain down, no Beating should make them rise; but they would lie and make a whining or groaning, tho' they were not tir'd, being but newly taken up.

We went from *Mocha* to the Continent, and kept sailing and touching along the Coast of *Chili*, often sending our Canoas ashore, till we came to *Copayapo*,<sup>1</sup> in the Lat. of about 26 S. We wanted Water, and so put ashore to see if we could find the River that bears the Name of the River of *Copayapo*. As soon as we came ashore we ascended a Hill, in hopes to descry that River from the top thereof; but contrary to our Expectation, when we came to the top, we had yet another steep and very high Hill to climb, and another after that; insomuch that before we reach'd the utmost heighth, I fainted for want of Water; but refreshing my self with that of my own, I at last came to the top of the third Mountain, where we sat down and rested our selves under the Shade of a vast craggy Rock. The

<sup>1</sup> Copiapó, practically the northern limit of natural vegetation on the coast of Chile.



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## PREFACE

THE *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* has been a favourite book from the time of its first publication in 1699. But since the issue of the second edition in the year 1704 it has never been reprinted as a whole in England until now.

I first became acquainted with Lionel Wafer upon the 'Isthmus of America' itself, after walking, somewhere about dawn, along the red floor of Culebra Cut, thence proceeding to Panama City; there, the little volume written two hundred years previously by the surgeon-buccaneer was given to me by that delightful poet of Panama, Tracy Robinson. The book was in my hand when I was strolling in the cool of the day along the stout, high-raised sea-wall. Noticeably aloof stood little groups of short, stocky, black-haired, brown-skinned youths, gazing out to sea; I learned that they were Cuna, and that this sea-wall is the traditional meeting-place, an hour or so before sundown every evening, of any 'Darien Indians' who chance to be in Panama City. This was in 1910. From that time the hope of editing Wafer's book was in my mind. The long and absorbing work of collecting material and annotating has often been interrupted, and even now there remain mysteries in Wafer's life which further research may reveal. Meanwhile, I owe debts of sincere gratitude to the officials of the Hakluyt Society, whose President and Honorary Secretary have spared so much time to the preparation of this volume; to the Marqués de Merry del Val, for help in connexion with the early Spanish Conquistadores; to Sir Claude and Lady Mallet; Mr. Philip Gosse; Father G. H. Joyce, S.J.; Mr. David Francis; Dr. C. Upson Clark, of New York; Don Narciso Garay, historian of Panama; Mr. Frank Cundall of Jamaica; Mr. George Wafer; and Mr. William Park, of the National Library of Scotland.

L. E. JOYCE.

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## INTRODUCTION

### LIONEL WAFER AND HIS TIMES

#### I

THE claim of Lionel Wafer to fame rests upon his record of a brief episode of some four months spent among the 'wild Indians' of Darien; and so just is the claim that two hundred and thirty years after the *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* was printed his book remains the most authoritative source of information concerning the native folk of south-east Panama.

Between the hills where the Chagre river rises and the westerly banks of the Atrato lies the mistily defined region of Darien, frequently included in the ephemeral captaincy of Castilla del Oro—Golden Castile. An accurate small-scale map of Darien or of the adjacent San Blas archipelago is still lacking, although gallant efforts have been made during the last four hundred years by Spaniards, buccaneers, and later travellers and official bodies since Independence, to map certain routes across the belt. Difficulties become formidable as soon as an attempt is made to reconcile Spanish, piratical, and modern descriptions; and names of localities. Lucidity is not aided by the fact that the name Darien was applied after the Spanish entry to both the Gulf of Urabá and the Gulf of San Miguel; and that the Atrato, flowing north, and the Chucunaque-Tuira, flowing south, were each called the river of Darien. Two-thirds of the Darien region is covered with forest, deep and majestic on the Atlantic slope, lighter and more deciduous on the drier Pacific littoral. Above the tangled bush, fantastically adorned with orchids and vines, typical trees rise eighty or a hundred feet, holding their crowns, covered after the first rains with golden, rosy, and blue flowers, above the straight and buttressed trunks. The line of the central cordillera is fairly defined east of the Chagre valley until, bending south, it breaks into a mass of tangled crests and ridges, holding high plateaux between the ranges. No mountain pass is less than five hundred feet high; and in the San Blas region the

average pass has a thousand feet elevation. The massif of great south-easterly Panama is at least twelve miles wide. Rain falls for eight months of the year. On the north hundreds of little streams flow into the tideless Atlantic coast; on the south other hundreds join the Pacific, with its twenty feet or more of rise and fall. Where gorges break the mountain barriers, great rivers twist through the thickly forested complex of hills, the Chagre, the Atrato, the Chepo and the Chucunaque rivers forming ancient highways of travel that almost cut the Isthmus into sections. Here was the scene of the first successful attempt of the seventeenth century on the part of non-Spanish Europeans to break into the Pacific by way of the 'Isthmus of America' and to raid the ports of Central and South America on the west coast.

At the time when the adventure occurred, in 1680-1, Wafer was surgeon to a band of English buccaneers. Afterwards, he accompanied his friends in a series of piratical expeditions ending in 1688; was imprisoned in Jamestown, Virginia, for nearly two years on piracy charges; and, after being permitted to return to England in 1690, eventually recovered from the none too willing hands of the Admiralty the bulk of the meagre contents of his sea-chest, collected during the years of buccaneering. His book was published in 1699, nine years after his return to England.

Wafer's personality is known chiefly through the medium of his lucid, accurate, and modest writings. No portrait of Lionel Wafer is recorded. It is not known certainly when or where he was born, where he received his evidently fair education and knowledge of surgery, or when or where he died. The only relative of whom he speaks is 'a brother', employed in Jamaica; so far as is known, he never had either wife or child. References to Wafer on the part of other writers are few; he is mentioned as a fellow author by the more famous Dampier, a shipmate for some three years; Walter Herries of the Company of Scotland, and Herries' attacker in print, knew him, and each speaks of him in a friendly manner. None of the three tells us a word of his personal appearance or characteristics, manner of life, or family. This companion of pirates appears to have been an amiable and keenly observant young man,

gifted with a disposition that allowed him to live with Cuna Indians of the Panama forest, to sail with buccaneers, to deal with highly placed politicians, to experience great physical hardships, endure hostility, forget grievances, and to accept better fortune, with a serene face. He possessed an accurate memory; and, when he wrote of regions unknown to his readers, did not permit himself to enter the tempting path of exaggeration. Every test applied to his story of things seen in Darien renders his trustworthiness more obvious.

Wafer says in the *New Voyage*, as explanation of his knowledge of Gaelic speech, that during his boyhood he knew the Highlands of Scotland and also certain regions of Ireland. This acquaintance suggests that Wafer's father may have been a Scots soldier whose regiment was quartered in Ireland during troubled times; that the family was one of those 'planted' in Ireland, from Scotland, by James I or by Cromwell; or simply that the proximity of, and constant interchange between, Argyle and Ulster invited enterprising folk. Mr. George Wafer, a member of the family now living in England, but connected with south-east Ireland, says that the Wafers are traditionally of Huguenot descent, and that the name has sometimes been spelled Weaver or Weber<sup>1</sup> by branches of the Wexford groups. The patronymic used by Lionel when in Virginia in 1688-90 was 'De la Wafer' or 'Delawafer'; he signed his book simply as 'Lionel Wafer'. Documents sometimes record his name as 'Waffer' or 'Wasser'.

When he went to sea for the first time he was, he says, 'too young' to make any great observations on the voyage; he was actually an assistant to the ship's surgeon, a 'loblolly-boy', that is, one who administered the loblolly, water-gruel given to patients of the day. He is not likely to have been more than seventeen years old at the time. The vessel in which he obtained this modest post was the East India Company's *Anne* (also called the *Great Anne*), in command of Captain Zachary Browne. She left England in February or March 1677, and, reaching Bantam (Java) on 13 July 1677, was sent on to Jambi (Sumatra) to lade with pepper. She returned to Bantam with a good cargo at the end of November or beginning of

<sup>1</sup> 'Wafer' would be spelt 'Uebher' in Gaelic, says Keith Henderson.

December, and was dispatched to England in late January 1678, arriving in London some five months later.

But Wafer did not return in her. He was left ashore, as he tells us, when the *Anne* sailed, but got a passage home in another vessel. This was the *Bombay Merchant*, which, under Captain Roger Bennett, had left England in March 1677 for Surat (India) and Bantam, arriving at the latter port on 23 December of the same year. Wafer is wrong in thinking that Captain Bennett died during the passage; his death occurred after the *Bombay Merchant's* arrival, on 8 January 1678. The ship was sent to Borneo, and she sailed for England under her new captain, John White, according to instructions dated 6 September 1678, in company with the *Unity* and *Expectation*. The three ships reached the Downs on 19 and 25 March 1679. Wafer stayed ashore for a month or two, and then secured another post as assistant surgeon on a ship; he was probably less than twenty years old at the time.

On this second voyage the embryo surgeon sailed westward, in a vessel bound for Jamaica and commanded by Captain Buckenham, a trusted ship-master who frequently carried letters between the Council of Trade and Plantations and the English-settled West Indies. Port Royal was probably reached in the early autumn of 1679, for Buckenham decided that he had time enough, before the sugar harvest and milling began (about December), to sail to the coast of Yucatan for a load of log-wood. Wafer's 'chief inducement' in coming to Jamaica had been to visit a brother, employed on the 'Angels'<sup>1</sup> sugar estate a few miles north-west of Spanish Town, on the Cobre river, belonging to Modyford, ex-Governor of the island. Perhaps this brother was one of the enterprising settlers who had accepted the special benefits offered by Charles II to emigrants to Jamaica. It seems unlikely that he had been transported, although forced emigration to Barbados and Jamaica, in and after Cromwell's time,<sup>2</sup> was resorted to in order to get

<sup>1</sup> The 'Angels' was still listed as an estate in the official census of Jamaican properties of 1884; it then consisted of 1744 acres of woodland, and cattle pastures or 'pens'.

<sup>2</sup> In 1649 Bristol merchants had successfully asked for 500 Scots, defeated by Cromwell, to send as labourers in the North American and West Indian

rid of men who had taken up arms on the losing side; for his position on the estate was good enough for Lionel to be received as a visitor. This brother provided the capital, too, which enabled the young surgeon to set up for himself in Port Royal. There he might have stayed had not chance led him to the company of Edmund Cook and another sea-captain just going off 'on the account'.

Wafer is reticent concerning his reasons for leaving Jamaica and joining a band of buccaneers; but their object in inviting his company was plain enough. The presence of surgeons was a first necessity in expeditions where fighting was almost inevitable. Wafer says that he met with two privateering captains in Port Royal, and that they 'took me along with them' when they sailed out 'toward the coast of Cartagena', which was not, as a matter of fact, their destination. These two masters were Edmund Cook (or Cooke) and Captain Lynch, sometimes called Lynnon. Of the latter no more is known; but Masfield suggests that Cook may be identical with the Captain Edmund Cook(e) whose pink, the *Virgin* of London, was captured by Spaniards in Caribbean waters, in 1673; the cargo was seized, the crew turned adrift, and the captain, after vainly trying to get restitution in Madrid, sought letters of reprisal.

To them, as to other buccaneers in Port Royal, the news of the sack of Porto Bello in 1679-80 must have come like the sound of a trumpet to a war-horse. Some at least of the leading spirits in the raid, John Coxon, Bartholomew Sharp, Sawkins, Cornelius Essex, Robert Allison (Alliston, Aletson), and Thomas Mackett (or Maggott), familiar frequenters of Port Royal, were well-known. In the MS. in the British Museum attributed to John Coxon it is stated that the first intention of the Porto Bello raiders was 'to goe into the Bay of Hundorus to cutt Logwood [with permission] from his Majesty's reall subject the Earle of Carlisle', who, a Governor reputed lenient to adventurers, was then nearly at the end of his term of office.

plantations; two years later, after the battle of Worcester, thousands more Scots were thus transported; Irish were shipped, virtually slaves, in like manner in 1652. After Monmouth's rebellion, 1685, Jeffreys transported 850 men to the West Indies; and as late as 1699 the arrival of 200 white 'servants' from Scotland, and their sale in Jamaica, is recorded.

Any pretence of cutting logwood was, however, soon abandoned, for the party 'concluded to make Capt. John Coxon their chief and to wood and water at Porttammorant<sup>1</sup> and after make an expedition to take Portavella'. They landed twenty leagues east<sup>2</sup> of Porto Bello, walked through the woods for six days, with the guidance and help of Indians,<sup>3</sup> attacked and looted the fortified port from the south, and carried off plunder and prisoners to a cay near the Bastimentos. The Spaniards took a measure of revenge by burning the nearest Indian village and killing twenty men. These native folk seem to have been Cuna; they impressed the buccaneers because they had 'doctors' who could 'raise the Divill att their pleasure', as Wafer thought his hosts did, a year later; and they spoke of the Spaniards 'by the name of walkers', that is to say, 'huaka', the word still used by modern Cuna for 'stranger', with an inimical implication.

To this group of natives, headed by 'Andreas', was due, according to more than one account, the first suggestion that the buccaneers should cross the Isthmus and raid the Spanish gold mines on the South Sea. They had other grievances besides the recent ruin of their village near Nombre de Dios. Basil Ringrose says that the original project urged by the Indians was an attack upon 'Tuckamore', i.e. the gold-washings on the Tumaco river, south of the Gulf of San Miguel. This objective was changed to the nearer Santa Maria, a fortified 'camp' on the Tuira, centre for gold collection from various riverine points; but it was equally desperate. To attain success, the buccaneers had to cross an unfamiliar region of tropical jungle and mountain, inhabited by a strange race; and to place themselves in the jealously guarded Pacific regions held by Spain against all other nations. The very lives of the buccaneers depended upon the good faith of the Cuna Indians; the expeditionaries were babes in the wood when once the shores of Darien were left behind. But no misgiving appears to have

<sup>1</sup> Port Morant, S.E. Jamaica.

<sup>2</sup> At Port Scrivan (Puerto del Escribano).

<sup>3</sup> Dampier says that this welcome, and aid, offered by the formerly dreaded Darien Indians to the English was due to a new friendship established by Captain William Knight.

troubled Captain Bartholomew Sharp and his friends, the rumour of another raid drawing to them hundreds of volunteers. The raiders of Porto Bello could not return to Jamaica, where the authorities, assailed by Spanish complaints, were pricked into readiness for stern measures with pirates; so a venture far afield promised less danger than a reckoning at home.<sup>1</sup>

## II. *The Isthmian Crossing*

These were the ideas that, permeating Port Royal, led Captain Cook to engage Lionel Wafer for an expedition to join Sharp and Coxon. Slipping from harbour, Cook picked up the main body of the buccaneers under Sharp, who refreshed at Boca del Toro (Almirante Bay), repaired their vessels, received adherents, and on 23 March 1680 moved south to the region of Golden Island. Here they were met by the Indians who had, as agreed, waited for them for 'three moons',<sup>2</sup> and who now brought presents of venison and plantains. The buccaneer fleet, assembled amongst the islets of the 'Sumblers' at the height of Darien's dry season, included a number of armed vessels. Captain Peter Harris commanded a ship of 150 tons, carried 25 guns and a crew of 107 men; Coxon's ship was of 80 tons burden, with 8 guns and 97 men. Sharp commanded a ship of 25 tons, with 2 guns and 40 men; Richard Sawkins, a ship of 16 tons, 1 gun, and 35 men. Edmund Cook, (35 tons, 43 men), Alliston (18 tons, 24 men), and Mackett (14 tons, 20 men) were without guns. Two French privateers also joined the party. But the latter, Captains Burnanoe<sup>3</sup> and Rowe (or Rose), with their French crews, 'declaring generally against a long march by land', stayed in the Caribbean.

<sup>1</sup> No foreign vessels had been seen off the Pacific coast of the Spanish-American colonies since Drake's day, a century previously. So secure were the Spaniards that all the guns guarding Panama City pointed landwards, defending the road to Venta de Cruces, by which Morgan had crossed to attack old Panama in 1671; none were turned seaward until after Sharp's expedition.

<sup>2</sup> Sloane MS. 48; Basil Ringrose's account, with decorations by Wm. Hack.

<sup>3</sup> Capt. Burnanoe (Bournano) had crossed as far as Chepo in 1678; the famous La Sound (Lessone) had preceded him there in 1675. Neither found the experiment worth repeating.



Alliston and Mackett were left with the ships and a guard party; and on Monday 5 April, 1680, 336 men<sup>1</sup> were landed on the main opposite Golden island. Each man was given two pounds of flour, made up into four cakes (journey or 'Johnny' cakes) boiled in sea-water, for provision, and nearly all carried a musket, pistol, and hanger.

Sharp led the expedition, displaying a red flag with a bunch of green and white ribbons; Sawkins' men followed, with a red flag striped with yellow; Harris commanded two divisions, and had two green flags; the fifth and sixth divisions, including men from Alliston's and Mackett's ships, were led by Coxon, carrying red flags; next came Captain Cook, with a red flag striped with yellow, and a hand and sword for device. In undistinguished positions marched Dampier, Ringrose, and Wafer, future chroniclers.

The buccaneers took a Negro or two as servants, and a couple of those almost indispensable helpers of foreign adventurers off the Spanish Main, Indians from the Mosquito Coast (Nicaragua), fine watermen, expert in spearing fish. Guiding the party marched the Cuna Indian chief Andreas, his son Augustine, the 'Golden-cap' of the buccaneers, and his ally Antonio, accompanied by a considerable number of their people.

They marched all day through the woods, and on the first night, as for many others following, says Cox, the adventurers had 'the cold ground for our bedding and the spangled firmament for our covering'. On 6 April, after climbing a high hill, they beheld far below a river which, the Indians said, ran into the South Sea; probably, the Chucunaque or its tributary the Sucubti. They marched up hill and down dale, eighteen miles. On 7 April they made their way beside the tortuous river, crossing many times; the Indian houses, Ringrose noted (for the Cuna were sufficiently confident to allow this formidable party of over three hundred foreigners to enter their clan-group villages), were very large and well built, 'far more neat than ours in Jamaica', with many interior divisions. These were the typical family dwellings of the Cuna, where the patriarch exercises control over all the group, consisting of his

<sup>1</sup> Five men fell out in early stages of the march.

wife and daughters with their husbands and children, and, often, grand-daughters with their families.<sup>1</sup>

On 9 April they waded the river fifty or sixty times, according to Sharp, following the tortuous Chucunaque towards its junction with the Tuira. By this time they were living on plantains, bananas, and wild hog (peccary or warree). Perhaps it was a consolation to see the 'Emperour', on 14 April, put on 'his mantle of pure gold', which was 'extraordinary splendid and rich', over his robe of white cotton; he also assumed a 'belt of Tygers teeth, and a hat of pure gold, with a ring and a plate like a Cockle Shell hanging at it of Gold in his Nose', says Cox.

On 15 April they attacked Santa Maria. The little town, guarded by a fort and surrounded by a stockade, had already received warning of the buccaneers' march; all the gold collected from the mines of the region had been removed two days previously. Sawkins seems to have been the hero of the day, rushing and breaking into the palisades ahead of the main party, who speedily mastered the feeble defence. The eclipse of Sharp's popularity began with this incident. Little loot was obtained, and the party decided to make a bolder bid for fortune in Pacific waters.

On 18 April they saw, for the first time, the 'South Sea'. In a flotilla of borrowed Indian canoes they reached the open sea by way of the Gulf of San Miguel, and, two days later, touched at Plantain island. Attacking and seizing a Spanish barque, they manned her with 130 of the buccaneers, and sailed her westward, seeking food; the rest of the party (two hundred, irrespective of Indians and Negroes) followed in the canoes. On 21 April they were within thirty miles of Panama City, landing at the island of Chepillo, opposite the mouth of the Bayano (Chepo) river. A skirmish with a Spanish ship ended in her escape and return to Panama; the Spaniards, however, were already aware of the presence of pirates in the Pacific. Three armed barques came to search for them, and

<sup>1</sup> Young men, upon marriage, live with the parents of the bride. This matriarchal rule applies even to important and elderly men; a widower may re-marry but must take a widow, to whose father he cheerfully subjects himself as though he were a young bridegroom.

on 23 May found the canoes apparently at their mercy, for the prize barque had gone seeking provisions; but the buccaneers boarded and captured first one and then another of the Spanish vessels, the third of the 'armadilla' escaping by flight. Eleven of the English had been killed, Captain Peter Harris receiving injuries from which he died two days later. The wounded needing more comfort than the barques afforded, the buccaneers sought and seized another larger vessel to serve as a hospital, and then lay before Panama City, hoping to capture a treasure ship coming from Peru. So far, the results of their enterprise, counted in gold, had been disappointing, and quarrels arose. Coxon,<sup>1</sup> criticized for his share in the battle of Perico, withdrew in anger, and 'with fifty of his men perswaded the Indians to return back, having no respect to the poore wounded men, carrying his Chirurgion with the best of our medicines unknown to the major part of us', remarks John Cox,<sup>2</sup> adding cheerfully, however, 'This evening (25 April) we tooke a ship with 50,000 pieces of eight<sup>3</sup> in her.'

Sawkins and Sharp now decided to refresh at the lovely island of Taboga, and there, within sight of Panama City, enjoyed the orchards and summer houses of the Spaniards. Sailing north, they made an unsuccessful attack upon the little town of Pueblo Nuevo, opposite Quibo island, and here Sawkins was killed, on 23 May 1680. Sharp was again left in command, and 63 of Sawkins's friends marked their regret by withdrawing from the expedition. Sharp's rule was short-lived, chiefly because booty was scarce. All the country near Panama City was in arms against the invaders, and shipping was warned all up and down the coast. But raiding might be profitable farther south; so, on 6 June, the pirate fleet stood due south for Peruvian ports, and although plans for attacking Guayaquil and Paita proved abortive since a keen look-out was

<sup>1</sup> For the next eighteen years Coxon spent an adventurous life, sometimes carrying a commission from Jamaica, sometimes raiding lawlessly, and sometimes peacefully cutting logwood in Campeche. He was more than once charged with piracy, but was always acquitted. Later he is said to have lived among the Mosquito (Miskito) Indians on the Wanks (Segovia) river, Nicaragua, and to have died there in 1698.

<sup>2</sup> Sloane MS. 49.

<sup>3</sup> A 'piece of eight' was a Spanish coin divisible into eight 'reales': then worth about five shillings in English money.

kept, a small success was scored when they took the port-town of Ilo, on 28 October. Fresh water or food was the most important loot. Hence they steered farther south to Chile, reaching and landing at charming La Serena, in Coquimbo Bay, on 3 December. This town, too, yielded little but provisions. Leaving it, they sailed due west for the Juan Fernandez group, spending Christmas on Más a Tierra,<sup>1</sup> the fruitful island that sheltered a succession of marooned men. Quarrels about leadership punctuated the festivities, for, says John Cox, 'the former dissenters had not forgot their old Trade, but were every day for a New Broome'. Sharp was put in irons, Watling elected as commander, and the expedition set out to attack Arica. A party landed on 30 January 1681, but during the assault Watling was killed, and the buccaneers retreated in disorder, although rallied by Sharp; three surgeons were left behind among the captured,<sup>2</sup> but Wafer had remained with the fleet. Reduced and disappointed, the attackers sailed away north, eventually anchoring off 'Drake's Island', the Isla de Plata. Here disputes broke out again, and when Sharp was finally elected by the majority, forty-four men (with one Spanish-speaking Indian, two Mosquito Indians, and five captured Negroes) decided to break away and to return to the Caribbean. Dampier, John Cook, and Wafer were of these dissentients. The majority party under Sharp kept the remaining large ship, the *Santissima Trinidad*.<sup>3</sup> John Cook's party were given the long boat and two canoes, with which to reach the Gulf of San Miguel. On 17 April 1681, when twelve leagues north-west of the Isla de Plata, the buccaneers parted company, Sharp sailing south while the three open boats steered north for the journey of six hundred miles and more.

The party of Sharp and Cox, (with whom was Basil Ringrose),<sup>4</sup> reduced by three withdrawals and a number of deaths, cruised

<sup>1</sup> Más a Tierra, 'nearer land'. The other large island of the group, Más Afuera, 'farther away', to the westward, has never been inhabited.

<sup>2</sup> The lives of the surgeons were spared, on the condition that they remained in, and gave their services to, Peru.

<sup>3</sup> A smaller vessel of 400 tons, commanded by Cox, had sunk off Guayaquil in August 1680.

<sup>4</sup> Ringrose, with thirteen others, got passages home in the *Lisbon Merchant*, and landed at Dartmouth 26 March 1682.

in the South Pacific for the next six months, raiding where they could. Sharp's chief exploit was the taking of the *Rosario*, with a cargo of metal ingots, later said to be silver, but mistaken by the buccaneers for lead. Two or three ingots only were saved and taken to Bristol, where the error was discovered. The *Rosario*, plundered after a fight, was set adrift in July 1681; little might have been heard of the facts had not Sharp carried back to England with him one of the Spanish crew, Simón Calderón of Santiago, Chile. Calderón gave evidence in 1682 that after taking the *Rosario* Sharp went back to Plata island, and thence to Paita; and (the coast being now roused against him) made his way round the Horn and to Barbados. Hereabouts the spoil was divided, 400 pesos going to each of 64 men. Calderón says that eight of the chief buccaneers took passage in the *Comadreja Blanca* (Captain Howard) and that he left them at Plymouth. The *Holy Trinity* had been handed over at Antigua, says Cox, 'to seven men that had lost their Shares at Play'.<sup>1</sup> Four of Sharp's men got to Jamaica (Morgan, then Deputy Governor, reported to London in March 1682), and were arrested; for the news of the raid on Porto Bello, the Isthmian crossing, and attacks upon Spanish towns had caused great excitement in the West Indies, as in Europe.

Morgan had at once issued another warrant (following that of May 1680 calling for the apprehension of Sharp, Coxon, and others concerned in the taking of Porto Bello) warning residents against having any dealings with 'the said villainous pirates lurking in and about this island and concealed by some wicked-minded men of their wicked complices'. Writing to Lord Sunderland, Morgan spoke of the difficulties of putting down buccaneering, when French ships, always hanging about the harbour, were ready to shelter runaways; international marauders were encouraged, too 'by the security of the Spaniards and their pusillanimity under all their plenty. I spare no care

<sup>1</sup> John Cox, in Sloane MS. 49, says that they reached Barbados on 28 January (1682). But the English frigate *Richmond* was in the harbour, searching for pirates, and they proceeded in the *Holy Trinity* to Antigua. Here they were refused permission to land, but some men got ashore secretly, while Sharp and sixteen men went on to Nevis and there obtained passages to England.

to put down this growing evil', declared Morgan, adding that the privateers 'discourage the Spanish from private trade with us, which would otherwise be considerable.' In a later letter Morgan emphasizes his last point, referring to the permission given to the English to supply Negroes to the American colonies of Spain, this and the accompanying trade in merchandise promising to make Jamaica prosperous, 'for all the current cash that we now have is brought here by private trade with them'.

Lord Carlisle, arrived in England, pointed out the difficulties of the situation to the Lords of Trade and Plantations; so long as the Spanish Viceroy, he explains, when they catch the log-wood cutters or traders, continue to 'deal so roughly with these English, to make prize of their ships and goods, and prisoners of their men, no good understanding is possible between the two nations'. As far as the privateers are concerned, their depredations are committed by men outside the reach of the English government, but the injuries the English suffer from the Spaniards 'are from men in office and public employ'.

Carlisle had 'heard of the capture of Porto Bello before my departure, but none of the privateers returned to Jamaica, but sailed straight to the river of Darien, and by that King's assistance passed through to the South Sea, where for all I know two or three hundred of them still remain. Coxon alone, who went with them as their captain, with five and fifty more, left them in consequence of some drunken quarrel; and these I met with off Point Negril [west coast of Jamaica] on my passage home. We gave chase with the *Hunter* frigate in company for 24 hours, but he out-sailed us.' Don Pedro de Ronquillo, Spanish Ambassador in London, hearing Calderón's story, pressed for punishment of the buccaneers; Morgan's letters backed him up, and Lord Carlisle could do no less. So Sharp, roystering in London, was made the scapegoat. Arrested with as many of his comrades-in-arms as could be found, Sharp was tried at the Marshalsea Court of the Admiralty in Southwark. All the accused were acquitted 'after a fair trial', says the author of the story inserted into the 'corrected' version of the *History of the Buccaneers*. The authorities had nothing against them, had it not been for 'one or two villains of our company, amongst

whom were one or two negroes', who 'had a spleen against Captain Sharp and others that had profited more by the voyage than they had done'.<sup>1</sup>

Set at liberty, Sharp 'wasted all his money in good fellowship', and then sought new pastures. An old vessel, lying derelict at London Bridge, was bought for £20, and when Sharp had put into her a crew of sixteen men, and provisions, including butter and cheese, he sailed to the Downs, seized a sea-worthy French ship, scuttled his own, and then, from Romney Marsh, stole cattle to meet the needs of a voyage. Thus equipped he sailed again westwards.

Perhaps we need not follow him farther. But it is interesting to note that in early 1684 Sir William Stapleton, Governor of Nevis, granted Sharp a commission to 'take and apprehend savage Indians and Pirates', a charge which was possibly taken seriously by the buccaneer; for a year later, when he sailed into the harbour of Bermuda and found the island in a ferment over the news of Monmouth's rebellion, he did not hesitate to place his services on the side of law and order. The Governor, Richard Cony, faced a revolt, and was glad to accept Sharp's assistance. In April 1686 Sharp wrote to the Earl of Sutherland 'to satisfy you further that there is rebellion against the King in all these islands', adding that 'people will not believe that any King but Monmouth is living'. The rebels had taken two forts, 'which, however, I and Captain Conway recovered. The country is still in arms and the Governor would be in danger of his life did we not at his request stay here to protect him'.

<sup>1</sup> Sharp took with him to England a portfolio full of maps and charts found in a captured Spanish vessel—perhaps, the *Trinity*; it is now among the Sloane MSS., No. 239. The maps show ports, harbours, and islands of the West Coast of South America, are rather crudely drawn, and coloured with ochre, indigo, and a few touches of vermilion.

Sharp probably took them himself to the able hands of Captain William Hack, fine draughtsman, map-maker, and friend of sea-rovers, who lived at Wapping. Hack copied and improved upon the originals; the Spanish charts bear very few topographical names. These, where they occur, have usually been inserted by an English pen. Hack's maps are full of names and other details, no doubt supplied by Sharp, Ringrose, and other observant buccaneers. A beautiful copy of Hack's maps, completed in 1684, was presented by Sharp to Charles II; another was sold to the South Sea Company in 1711 by one William Hill, then in prison for debt.

Sharp may have exaggerated the danger in order to achieve merit; but Jamaica at least had reason to sympathize, for hundreds of men of Monmouth's army, taken prisoner after Sedgmoor, were sent to Jamaica and Barbados to serve in the plantations for ten years, and some of these joining the 'maroons' had raised an abortive rebellion in August 1685.

Sharp 'plied earnestly' into the reasons for the rebels' actions, but could find only 'trivial objections' to the Governor. However, Sharp's activities did not save him from being tried for piracy in Nevis in February 1687. He was accused of illegal acts off Jamaica in 1684, and off Campeche and on the high seas in October 1685. No witnesses were forthcoming, Sharp was acquitted on all counts, and Sloane heard in 1688 that he was acting as Governor of Anguilla.

After parting from Sharp on 17 April 1681, the party in the canoes and long boat rowed cheerfully northward. The moving spirits were John Cook and William Dampier. The latter, twenty-nine years old at this time, held no important post among the raiders, but already displayed something of the qualities that later made him eminent. A dour and lonely man, superior in aims and intellect to most of his companions, the future writer, hydrographer, and navigator had the abiding characteristic of never suffering fools gladly. But Wafer evidently admired and respected him, and for this reason, and because he distrusted Sharp, accompanied him willingly back to Darien.

The party was just south of Cape San Francisco on 19 April 1681, and arrived without accident at the end of the month, when the dry season was approaching its close, in the Gulf of San Miguel. Here they had news of Spanish ships of war keeping watch for intruders in the entrance, and so crept past, northward, to a point of land on the west of the Gulf, where the boats were abandoned. Hiding in the light woodland of the Pacific, beside a river's mouth, they began, on the first day of May 1681, the journey whose incidents form the main subject of Wafer's book.

They followed the Congo river for a few days. On 5 May occurred the gunpowder accident that injured Wafer's knee. Five days later he was obliged to give up his attempt to march with the party, and remained in the woods with Richard



Gopson and John Hingson. The two latter were uninjured, but exhausted by the struggle through the jungle. Two more men, who had fallen out of the line of march on 4 May, presently joined the three, and all remained for some four months with the Indians of Darien. These Cuna folk cured Wafer's wound with native remedies, but showed an inhospitable and grudging spirit until two of the tribe, taken by Dampier to lead the way back to the Caribbean coast, returned loaded with presents. This tactful treatment, and Wafer's luck in finding an opportunity to show European medical skill in the case of 'Lacenta's lady', secured for the buccaneers the warm friendship of the Indians; Wafer says that the Chief, Lacenta, was anxious for him to remain permanently, promising his daughter to the surgeon in marriage. Wafer was obliged to seek an excuse to proceed to the coast, promising to return when he had procured English hunting dogs for the Chief. Protestations were probably, on both sides, no more than polite gestures, for the great characteristic of the Cuna throughout the four centuries during which the white man has been acquainted with these proud folk has been jealousy for racial purity, attained only by keeping out foreigners. Nearly two hundred years before Wafer's time Peter Martyr had recorded with some astonishment that the Darien natives were 'severe defenders of their patrimony'. 'A man would not think what great wrath and malice was kindled in their hearts against our men, and with what desperate minds they fought for the defence of their liberty, which they more esteem than life or riches.'

Wafer and his four companions were conducted to the coast by almost the same route as that by which Dampier had been guided, the party emerging, after a week's march, through wooded and mountainous country, at the mouth of the Concepción river. A few miles away, at La Sound's Key, buccaneer vessels were riding; they had come to look for the missing men, and within a few hours the five were greeting old companions, Dampier among them.

Several accounts of the Darien crossing of 1681, and of subsequent raids and adventures in the 'South Seas', together with many books of maps and charts of Caribbean and Pacific ports and islands of especial interest to buccaneers, are preserved

in the British Museum, among the manuscripts collected by Sir Hans Sloane and bequeathed to the nation. Sloane was in the West Indies in 1687-8, as physician to the Duke of Albemarle, and took advantage of opportunities to meet many seasoned sea-rovers. For Albemarle, who arrived in Jamaica in December 1687, immediately allied himself with the old band of pro-buccaneers, and abandoning temporarily the repressive measures of Lynch and Hender Molesworth, reappointed Sir Henry Morgan to membership of the Council—from which office he had been suspended, together with his brother-in-law, Robert Bindloss.

Sloane knew Morgan, and in fact seems to have attended him, for he includes notes on his case<sup>1</sup> in medical memoranda of the *Voyage to the Islands*. It is possible that in the favourable milieu of Port Royal Sloane began his collection of buccaneer narratives and maps, and made acquaintance with adventurers who later sent or brought documents to him in London. He was, subsequently, a friend of Dampier, and was instrumental in the painting of the great navigator's portrait by Murray.

Among the different relations of the Isthmian crossing, those of the 'ingenious' Basil Ringrose take precedence for lucidity and completeness (Sloane MS. 48); nothing had been said by Oexmelin himself concerning Darien, but a brief story of the adventure was printed at the end of Crooke's first edition of the English version of the *History of the Bucaniers of America*<sup>2</sup> (1684). A long, detailed account was obtained later from Ringrose, as Crooke explained, at the suggestion of 'Gentlemen living at Wapping', and printed as Part IV of succeeding editions. Interesting lights are also thrown upon what was a notable adventure even in the heyday of buccaneering by the journal, 'in a plain Tarpaylin Habbitt,' relating *John Cox his Travills over the Land into the South Seas: from thence Round the*

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir H.M., aged about 45, lean, sallow-coloured, his Eyes a little yellowish . . . much given to drinking and sitting up late.' The note proceeds to relate that the patient tried many doctors, including a 'Black, who plaistered him all over with Clay and Water, and by it augmented his Cough. He left his Black Doctor and sent for another, who promis'd his Cure, but he languished, and his Cough augmenting, died soon after.'

<sup>2</sup> Translated not from the Dutch original of Oexmelin (Esquemeling) but from the Spanish version of Alonso de Bonne-Maison.

*South Parte of America to Barbados and Antegoe* (Sloane MS. 49. Written for the Duke of Albemarle); by the manuscript attributed to John Coxon (Sloane MS. 2752); and by Sharp's various accounts, of which one (Sloane MS. 46a) begins briskly: 'Munday we landed at Golden Island with 330 men bound for the town of St. Amarya'.

A somewhat different account, written by Ringrose, with interpolations by Sharp in his own favour, was published in London in 1684, with a preface by Philip Ayres, entitled *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Bartholomew Sharp*. The relation begins: 'Gold was the bait that tempted a Pack of Merry Boys of us near Three Hundred in Number . . . to list ourselves in the service of one of the Rich West Indian Monarchs, the Emperour of Darien,' and is throughout an amusing example of impudent journalism, coloured to please public taste for marvels, and to obviate accusations of piracy. Sharp's own 'Journal of the Voyage to the South Seas' (Sloane MS. 3820) is also worth comparing with other versions.

#### IV. *Second Expedition to the South Sea*

Again in the Atlantic, Wafer went at first to a vessel commanded by Captain Wright, with whom Dampier was sailing; but the French buccaneering vessels of their company were short of men, and the surgeon was presently transferred, with a number of other English, to the ship of Captain Yanky. The ships cruised, sometimes together, in Caribbean waters, until late in 1682, when Yanky and Wright parted company after a stay at Tortuga. Wright sailed north to Chesapeake Bay, where Dampier tried life ashore for the next nine months; Wafer remained as surgeon, and John Cook as quartermaster, with Yanky until the affair of the Spanish prize at the Isle de Vache. The incident reads like comedy. According to privateers' law, command of a prize could be claimed by the quarter-master of the victorious ship, for he stood next to the captain, holding a position equivalent to that of Chief Officer to-day. John Cook, therefore, asked for the captaincy, and when this was unwillingly ceded by the French, he took aboard with him a crew of English who had found life unsatisfactory

on a French vessel. Goods, prize money, and arms were shared out at the Ile de Vache. Captain Yanky, however, 'grutching the English such a vessel', seized her again, turned out the English<sup>1</sup> and put them ashore, took their goods and guns, and sailed the ship away to Petit Guaves. Captain Tristian, more kindly than 'Yanky Dutch', took a few of his English acquaintances, including Cook, Edward Davis, and Wafer, aboard his own vessel. When they arrived in the outer harbour of Petit Guaves, where Yanky and the prize already lay, the French captains went ashore; Cook and Davis promptly took possession of Tristian's ship, set the French crew ashore, and sailed her back to the 'Isle of Ash'. Before the French Governor realized what had happened, the marooned English had been taken aboard the vessel (presently renamed the *Revenge*) and a French ship just arriving from Europe with a cargo of wine was encountered and seized. Shortly afterwards the English buccaneers increased their embryo fleet by the capture of a 'ship of good force', a vessel sufficiently equipped to justify a new enterprise. As to the scene, anywhere would be better than the Caribbean at the moment; English ships of war, in close touch with the Governors of Jamaican and other West Indian havens, were on the watch for any man or vessel reported as having taken part in the attack on Porto Bello or the Panama crossing. Port Royal, with its seductive hospitality, was now a closed door; and not only English, French, and Spanish official hands were against them, but they had reason to expect reprisals from their former French buccaneer companions.

The best resort for the moment, while plans were made and provisions collected, was some part of the English colonies of North America where not too many questions were asked. A group of seasoned sea-rovers, including Dampier, was known to be living near Point Comfort. Perhaps on this account the *Revenge* was sailed into Chesapeake Bay one April day in 1683; and perhaps because they were tired of the green flats and tobacco plantations of Virginia, Dampier and his friends jumped at the chance of a new voyage. A bold stroke was decided upon, no less than a voyage round the Horn into the

<sup>1</sup> His only shadow of excuse was that Cook had no commission as a privateer.

South Seas, a route that was possibly suggested by the news of Sharp's return. Four months were spent in preparation, and on 23 August 1683 Cook, with Wafer as the only surgeon, raised anchor and set his course southward.

As pilot for the dangerous navigation of the toe of South America Cook carried William Ambrosia Cowley, whose account of this 'Voiage to the South Sea'<sup>1</sup> came into the hands of Sir Hans Sloane. Cowley says that he honestly believed that the ship was bound for the island of 'Petigauvoos', and if so he was speedily undeceived; for Cook made first for the African coast, and near the Cape Verde Islands captured a 'Holland shipp bound for Virginia with Negroes', an interloper, in fact. So they took 'six casks of Canary out of him with some Vittuals and Limmon, telling him they might as well rob him as he the King, he being bound to rob the King of his duties'.

Farther south, they anchored one night at the mouth of the 'Sirilione river' and saw, when day broke, 'a lovely ship', a sight to make sea-rovers covetous. She came from Denmark, carried 36 large guns, and 70 men. Cowley states that he was the inventor of the trick that made her theirs. The beautiful Danish ship was re-named the *Batchelor's Delight*, and faithfully served her new possessors for the next five years. But, before directing his course to Patagonia, Cook took a vessel belonging to the Duke of Brandenburg, carrying ten guns. Thus strengthened, the buccaneers burnt the *Revenge* at Sherborough, and left the African coast. Sailing past the 'Sibble d'wards',<sup>2</sup> and nearing the eastern entrance of the Strait of Magellan, a ship was sighted. It was the *Cygnat* of London, commanded by Captain Charles Swan, and aboard her was Basil Ringrose, lately of the Isthmian crossing. He had returned to London, written an account of the reverberating affair, and, perhaps in consequence of the resulting publicity, had helped to inspire a trading venture on the part of the owners of the *Cygnat*. He sailed in her as one of three super-cargoes, together responsible for merchandise worth five thousand pounds, to be traded, if all went well, to the Spanish colonies of the South American west coast.

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 54.

<sup>2</sup> The Falkland Islands.

Swan, a captain accustomed to West Indian voyages and worthy of a better fate than that awaiting him, kept warily away from Cook's vessel, suspecting her character. Two more ships were presently sighted. One of these was the *Nicholas* of London, captained by John Eaton; the other, a Portuguese prize taken by Eaton off Brazil, was in charge of one Morton, a sailing companion of Sharp.

When the three vessels were in hail of each other at Port Famine (Sarmiento's ill-fated City of Philip, close to the site of the present Magallanes City) eight of Swan's men stole the long-boat and deserted to Morton, preferring to try their luck with the buccaneers; but fate was against them, for the vessel was, soon afterwards, lost in a storm. Swan and Eaton were separated by the same inclement weather.

The *Batchelor's Delight* missed the entrance of Magellan Strait, but entered the Strait of Le Maire on 6 February 1684, encountering ferocious gales. Dampier says that no sun was seen at rising or setting until the buffeted vessel sailed out into the South Sea. They ran south as far as the sixtieth degree of South latitude; but on 14 February, working northward, found themselves west of Cape Horn in South latitude 57. Still painfully making their way northward, they reached South latitude 36 on 17 March; and two days later met Eaton in the *Nicholas*, just north of Valdivia.

Thenceforward the *Nicholas* and the *Batchelor's Delight* kept company to the islands of Juan Fernandez. Here they refreshed, and were greeted on 22 March 1684 by the Mosquito Indian left behind in January 1681, just before the battle of Arica. The sick men, disabled by scorbutic troubles, were put ashore and dieted with fresh meat and green herbs, the four doctors of Eaton's ship helping all the invalids alike. No doubt, Wafer, still 'very young' and inexperienced, learnt something from them; but it seems that here Captain John Cook acquired the sickness of which he presently died.

The buccaneers left Más a Tierra island on 8 April, and sailed north in company, attempting no raids, but keeping twelve to fourteen leagues out to sea in order to avoid recognition by Spaniards ashore. Their first capture was a Spanish ship, taken on 3 May, sailing from Guayaquil, bound for Lima, and laden

with timber. The buccaneers discovered from her officers that the Spanish authorities were already alert, for Swan in the *Cygnnet*, vainly trying to traffic openly with the Valdivia colony, had caused a commotion. He was suspected of being a pirate, and treated like one; and in an effort to prove his good faith had told of the presence of buccaneers in the South Sea.

The prize was taken to Lobos island (9 May), and here the ships were hove down for cleaning, and plans discussed. Altogether, the buccaneers counted 108 men fit for action; and with this force an attack on Guayaquil or Trujillo was contemplated. Next day, three sail were sighted, and after a brief chase Cook took one ship and Eaton the two others; all were bound for Panama, and were laden chiefly with flour; but also found aboard were letters addressed to Panama from the authorities of Lima; many tons of quince marmalade; a 'stately mule'; and a large image of the Virgin, carved in wood, painted, and intended to grace a church in Panama. One of the letters told of treasure withheld for fear of pirates, so they avoided the inflamed coast and took their prizes to the Galapagos islands. Here Captain Cook, desperately ill, was taken ashore and put into a tent, to have such comfort as the land afforded; and a great store of the seized flour<sup>1</sup> was hidden for future need.

Bearing north again, leaving the coast of South America unvisited, and sailing well to the west of Panama Bay, the *Batchelor's Delight*, with her consorts the *Nicholas* and the largest of the prizes, was steered towards Cocos island, off Costa Rica. Missing it, the little fleet sighted the headlands off the Gulf of Nicoya, and here, within a few miles of the shore, Captain Cook died. When his body was taken on land for burial the buccaneers learned that the Spaniards were expectant, remembering that Sharp had repaired the *Holy Trinity* in Nicoya in 1681 with the help of local carpenters. No raid was attempted. The buccaneers sailed away on 20 July 1684 after electing Edward Davis as captain of the *Batchelor's Delight*.

Realejo, port for the Nicaraguan capital of León, was their objective; but here too the Spaniards were on guard, and after

<sup>1</sup> Dampier says that '5,000 Packs' were put ashore; Cowley's estimate was 1,500. Wafer said later that they removed 'the 500 Packs'.

a few days' hesitation the fleet bore north for the Gulf of Amapala.<sup>1</sup>

Landing from a canoe on Manguera island, Davis caught a Spanish friar and two Indian boys, and made them guide him to the Indian hill-top town on Amapala (Tiger island). When the island authorities asked who they were, Davis replied that they were Biscainers,<sup>2</sup> sent by the King of Spain to clear the seas of pirates, and had come into the gulf to careen their ships. This declaration ensured a warm welcome from Spaniards and Indians, but indiscretion betrayed them; even so, the buccaneers obtained Indian guides to another island 'where we killed Beef whenever we wanted', a great boon for men long at sea with no fresh food but the fish speared by the Mosquito Indians.

The whole of August seems to have been spent in refreshing

<sup>1</sup> Or Fonseca Bay.

<sup>2</sup> Sea captains of Biscay had more than once offered to attempt, on behalf of the Spanish Government, a task which had baffled the Spanish fleet and the special policing force of the Armada de Barlovento; they offered to seek out the pirates in their haunts and to beat them at their own game of chasing, seizing and looting vessels. The suggestion was officially accepted by Charles II of Spain. On whatever terms they were licensed, the Biscayans regarded the opportunity as one for privileged looting. The Governor of Barbados reported in 1688 to the Lord President of the Council in London that the Biscayans 'interrupt English traders more than any pirates ever did. They not only confiscate ships and goods but put all the men to death.' A little later Sir Nathaniel Johnson, Governor of Antigua, complained to the Lords of Trade and Plantations: 'it is hard that while we do our best to suppress our pirates, Spain should encourage theirs'. The captured English vessels were sold, and the men sent for sale as slaves to Spanish colonies—many to Española. No answer, he said, was sent to protests; there was no protection but force. 'Nothing better is to be expected of the Spanish in the West Indies, for however brave their ancestors may have been, they have degenerated into a dastardly mongrel herd of mulattoes, mustees, and other spurious mixtures and are certainly now become the very scum of mankind', he declared furiously.

The French, hostile to England since the accession of William of Orange, added seriously to the troubles of the English in the Caribbean; a petition from the merchants and planters of Jamaica sent home in 1689 declares that the 'French of Petit Guavos, which is almost in sight of our island, are strong, and the place is a nest of pickeroons'; therefore, valuable fleets needed convoys, and they ask for 'at least two good sailing frigates' to protect honest traders.



and careening; for it was not until 3 September that they made ready to sail again, setting ashore the friar, and leaving to the friendly Indians the prize ship, still half loaded with flour. They steered south, encountering 'tornadoes', and eventually anchored off the Isla de Plata on 20 September. Eaton, arriving in the *Nicholas* at the same anchorage next day, was rebuffed, since the captain of the *Batchelor's Delight* did not agree with suggestions that all should share henceforth equally in treasure, still to seek. Davis went farther south to Cape St. Helena, where manifestations of natural pitch and petroleum interested Dampier. The small town of Manta yielded no booty; and, though the buccaneers heard of Monte Cristo mountain, towering nearby, the time had not yet come when the region was famous for its finely woven hats, 'Panama' by courtesy. A landing party heard news of a large group of pirates recently arrived in the South Sea by way of Darien, for the tale of Sharp's audacities, and Cook's new raids, had evoked numbers of imitators. The new-comers were cruising in canoes and piraguas, it was said, and were probably seeking to seize ships; so the Viceroy of Lima had sent word up and down the coast that, if strangers should be sighted near any port, all Spanish vessels in harbour were to be burnt, in order to avoid lending wings to the enemy. Towns on the coast were also instructed to keep no quantity of stores; and men were sent to several islands with orders to destroy goats and other food animals.

The *Batchelor's Delight* lay at the Manta anchorage for some days while fresh plans were made. On 2 October 1684 they were joined by Swan in the *Cygnnet*, returning south from another unlucky attempt at trading, this time in the Gulf of Nicoya. Neither Spaniards nor Indians dared deal with him, but a certain amount of merchandise had been traded to the newly arrived party of buccaneers. This expedition, led by young Captain Peter Harris (nephew of the Peter Harris of the Panama crossing of 1681) had crossed Darien from Golden Island in June and seized Santa Maria. The Spaniards fled or were driven out, and Harris obtained 120 pounds' weight of gold, including a nugget as big as a hen's egg. He had then made for the Gulf of San Miguel, and there had seized a barque,

in which he was now cruising. With the help of this vessel he had successfully routed a Spanish squadron off Panama. His men, now well supplied with money but dressed in ragged clothes, were glad to trade their gold for Swan's fire-arms, velvet caps, and other stores.

At Plata Island all the rest of the *Cygnets*' cargo was bartered to Davis' men or thrown overboard, except silks, muslins, and bar iron for ballast; for Swan now abandoned any hope of trading with the colonies of Spain and threw in his lot with the buccaneers—still, however, setting aside ten per cent. of profits for his London owners. Another prize, laden with timber, was presently taken, and from her crew they learnt that ten Spanish ships of war were being equipped to hunt for pirates. Davis repented that he had not come to terms with Eaton, sent a barque to look for him with a new offer, appointed a rendezvous at Plata Island, and meanwhile cruised southward again, landing a party at Paita on 2 November. The port was taken without difficulty, but no booty or food was found; Eaton had been here some weeks before in the *Nicholas*, taken two ships, burnt them when no ransom could be got, and had sailed away empty handed. From Paita the buccaneers sailed to the island of Lobos de Tierra, and thence to Lobos del Mar, where repairs and cleaning were carried out. While here they saw a Spanish barque scouting, but were undiscerned, and thus were able to surprise the little town of Puna, on the island some twenty miles below Guayaquil. The ships were hidden, and Swan and Davis, with parties of men in canoes, rowed upstream to attack the city; but the approach was mismanaged, a hue and cry raised, and the buccaneers returned without striking a blow. Their sole booty from the Guayas' estuary consisted of three barques full, as Dampier says, of 'lusty young men and women Negroes', a thousand altogether. He had the idea of taking this working party to the mines above Santa Maria, using Davis' cache of flour as rations, and operating the gold-washings. The plan did not commend itself to the leaders; but Dampier still had the plan in his mind in 1704, when he was off Panama as commander of the *St. George* privateer.

Cruising northward, they touched at Plata Island, presently found their barque, that had meanwhile vainly sought Eaton, and

proceeded, with the help of captured Spanish pilot-books, to seek in unfrequented river-mouths for Indian canoes, needed for landing when towns were to be attacked. Tumaco village was taken on the way, and a Spanish ship that lay nearby; then came the capture of a packet-boat from Panama to Lima. The Spanish captain threw the letters overboard, but they were fished up by the English, who spent the next few days reading them and so learnt that the annual fleet from Spain had arrived at Porto Bello. This, they hoped, meant that the treasure fleet of Peru would sail from Callao to Panama City to hand over accumulated precious metals and jewels; so the buccaneers, greatly heartened, decided to make for the Pearl Islands to careen and to lie in wait for splendid booty. On 14 February, however, there was still no sign of the treasure fleet, so Swan and Davis sailed nearer to Panama, obtained two English prisoners in exchange for thirty or so men captured from Spanish ships or towns, went to Taboga, and here saw a great fleet of canoes rowing in Panama Bay. This was a band of 200 French *flibustiers* under Grognet and L'Escuyer (said to hold commissions from the French West India Company), with some 80 English associates. Swan and Davis gave Grognet a prize ship; the Frenchmen gave them blank commissions from the Governor of Petit Guaves; and so, with these friendly gestures, a temporary alliance was formed. The French also gave news of another possible addition to the pirate fleet: the English Captain Townley, with 180 men, had crossed Darien and was building canoes at Santa Maria, still abandoned by Spaniards.

Swan set out to fetch Townley, but this able captain had already emerged in the canoes, captured two Spanish vessels, and was cruising in Panama Bay. He joined Davis on 3 March 1685. Within a few weeks the pirate forces in the Pacific had been reinforced by yet another considerable expedition of mixed nationalities, but chiefly French, headed by the notorious Laurent de Graff. The most detailed account of the adventures of this band was written, on his return to France, by a young ne'er-do-well of a Parisian family, Raveneau de Lussan. Shipped by his parents to the West Indies, he joined de Graff at Petit Guaves after Sharp had drawn attention to Darien, and an

expedition to the Pacific was planned. Reaching Golden Island in late February 1685, they heard of the crossings of Harris and Grognet, for as Dampier said, the Isthmus had become a 'common road for buccaneers'. Laurent de Graff had 87 men; but before they started two more French buccaneers, Michel, with 118 men, and Sharp's former associate, Rose, with 64 men, joined the party. As usual, Indians were forthcoming to act as guides; two chieftains, with forty followers, acted as escorts on the journey, begun on 26 February. De Lussan is emphatic about the miseries endured for six days, before a river was reached where canoes were built during March. On the first day of April 1685 the expedition of de Graff embarked in fourteen new canoes, arriving in the Gulf of San Miguel twelve days later. They numbered about 300, bringing up the total count of pirates near Panama Bay to something like 1,000.

The English ships were so crowded that food could not be prepared quickly enough with the ordinary equipment of the galleys; so a sugar-mill on the main was raided, not for treasure, but for the sake of taking some of the big copper sugar boilers to use for cooking pirates' victuals. The mixed fleet cruised about, picking up a vessel here and there, and at last finding letters that gave definite information of the treasure ships from Peru. They were shortly coming north. The pirates sailed, scanning the horizon, and upon 28 May sighted the Peru fleet, awaited for so many months. As a matter of fact there was no gold aboard, for the vessels, well advised of the pirates' presence, had sailed far to the westward of their usual route near the Pearl Islands, fetched a long curve, landed the treasure at La Villa, and then had come seeking the buccaneers. They had fourteen sail, besides a number of large piraguas. Of the English and French buccaneers, Davis, the 'Admiral', in the *Batchelor's Delight*, with 36 guns and 156 men, was most formidable; Swan, 'Vice-Admiral', had 16 guns and 140 men; no others possessed large guns. Townley had 110 men, Grognet, 308; Harris,<sup>1</sup> 100. The crews of Branly's barque, Townley's

<sup>1</sup> In a prize originally taken by Knight in March, but which lost touch with her owner while in charge of 'Mr. More' with a few men. The straying vessel met Davis and Swan, and was given by the latter to young Peter Harris.

barque, Davis' tender, Swan's tender, and the fireship, made up another 146 men. A great fight ensued during the whole of 29 May. But there was no victor, for the buccaneers, exchanging shots when they could, were chased by the Spanish fleet all round Panama Bay, and at sundown (six o'clock) having completed the circle and shaken off the enemy, anchored off Pacheco Island in the shelter from which they had sailed in the early morning. The Spaniards on 30 May withdrew to the neighbourhood of Panama City, and both sides took breath. The English had lost only one man. But they were furious with Grognet, who had not played the part expected of him; his excuses that his men refused the encounter, and that the wind prevented his coming to Davis' assistance, were not accepted, and evidently Dampier expresses the popular view when he says that at the island of Quibo they 'cashiered our cowardly companion'. The partnership was over. Further light is cast on this period not only by the book of Raveneau de Lussan but by the deposition of Richard Arnold, who crossed the Isthmus in 1684 with Harris and was at the battle of Panama. Later, after Davis had gone south again, Arnold, with thirty-eight others, asked leave to return to the Atlantic; the always reasonable Davis agreed, and gave them two small craft in which to reach 'the river Andriell'. At the Gulf of San Miguel they obtained six Indian canoes, paddled up-stream to the foot of the mountains and then marched for six days to the Caribbean coast. Here, in canoes again, Arnold and five friends met Captain Peter Courtney, who took them aboard and landed them at Manatee Bay, Jamaica. Molesworth heard of the party, had them arrested, and took the statement of Arnold because he seemed 'the most rational' of the six.

The French, who retorted to charges of cowardice by accusing the English of impiety in sacking Spanish churches, continued cruising, and with the help of Townley took a great booty from Guayaquil in July 1686. Grognet had died in the previous May, and the death of Townley on 9 September from wounds received in a fight in Panama Bay on 22 August, diminished their leadership. Fortunes dwindled; Spanish ships as well as towns became more wary, loot was lessened to the vanishing point. The *flibustiers* often went hungry; and de

Lussan says candidly that they never had a good ship after parting from the English. At the end of 1687 they decided to return to the Atlantic; but the Darien path, they heard, was closed since the Spanish in Panama had succeeded in conciliating the Indians, a statement that seemed to be confirmed when they seized a native piragua captained by an Indian who carried a Spanish commission; this was probably a Chocó, not a Cuna, alliance with Spaniards.

The French party decided to take a more northerly land route, and entered Nicaragua. De Lussan says that he changed thirty thousand pieces of eight, chiefly won by gambling, into more portable gold and jewels, before the party began, in January 1688, an almost incredible march across the widest part of Nicaragua. After leaving Segovia town they followed the course of the great Wanks river, cut the throats when opportunity offered of some of their English companions who carried gold, and emerged on the Mosquito Coast in March. Here they found a ship bound for Jamaica, and so returned to the West Indies, at about the same time when Wafer and his friends also reached the Caribbean after their terrible journey round the Horn.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stories of the new series of audacious piracies in the South Seas had quickly reached the enraged ears of the Governor of Jamaica. Nothing was lost in the telling. Writing from Port Royal on 15 March 1685 Hender Molesworth reported to the Earl of Sunderland:

‘By letters from Panama I understand that eight or nine hundred piratical English have possessed themselves of an island called Perico, where they have fortified themselves, and maintained it against all the force that the Spanish could make against it.’ Manta, near Lima, he heard, had been plundered, and he supposed that Eaton and Swan are concerned in the matter. ‘The men at Perico are for the most part those who have long haunted these seas, and, finding themselves discouraged at their old trade, have joined together and have been conducted by the Darien Indians through the country until they got opportunity to seize the island. The design has been afoot a year, when the pirates began to make rendezvous at Golden Island, the Darien Indians being ever enemies to the Spaniards.’ They have sent out parties and taken great booty, he hears; and remarks that if these pirates are not overthrown, not only Spain but all Europe will be injured, and many men will be drawn away from the Island (Jamaica) despite all efforts.

A few weeks later Molesworth further reported rumours that the pirates ‘have erected double palisades, filled between with sacks of flour, that, hardened by rain, will resist any shot. All the English in the South Seas are

Davis and his companions, after 'dismissing' the French at Quibo, on 15 June, and finding Harris, who had been forced away during the fight, decided to abandon the search for treasure fleets and to make land attacks. Knight joined them on 5 July, and with the French captain Rose, who came asking to accompany them, with fourteen men in a piragua, they sailed two weeks later for Realejo, projecting an attack on León, twenty miles inland. Branly and Harris, whose ships had sunk, were aboard Davis.

A march to León, begun on 10 August, yielded little; the city was abandoned, the Spaniards hiding in the woods. Demands for a large ransom were ignored, and the buccaneers went back to Realejo. Here, on 25 August, Swan and Davis separated. Swan intended to sail north for Mexico and then to cross the Pacific to the East Indies. Dampier left Davis in order to accompany Swan on this great passage. Harris remained with Davis in the *Batchelor's Delight*, and Captain Knight sailed in his company. Swan, at parting, fired fifteen guns as a 'last farewell' of Davis; and Davis 'fired eleven guns in return of the civility'.

All the adventures experienced while in Davis's company between 23 August 1683 and 27 August 1685 are dismissed by Wafer in a few sentences. Of the extraordinary gathering of pirates in the Pacific, the long wait for the treasure fleet, and of association with the French, he does not say a single word. He left details to Dampier, fellow buccaneer author, whose first volume was published long before Wafer's; but on page 112 of the present volume he takes up the thread of narrative again, following the parting from Swan. He speaks of Davis's visit to the Gulf of Amapala and the scourge of fever that afflicted the crews for whom he was the sole medical helper; and of the next movement of Davis and his consorts that took them to Cocos Island, west of Costa Rica. Apparently no said to be collected in one body.' The French continued to issue commissions to privateers operating against the Spaniards, thus encouraging lawlessness. 'The whole party must be now two thousand strong', wrote the perturbed Lieutenant Governor. As a guarantee of good faith on the part of the English authorities, Molesworth sent H.M.S. *Ruby* first to convoy a couple of Spanish ships in safety to Porto Bello, and then to Golden Island and the Isle of Pines, to hunt and destroy pirate craft.

attempt was made by the Spaniards to interfere with them. Townley accompanied them here, but later decided to join the French rather than continue south to the west coast of South America, the objective of Davis and Knight after leaving Cocos Island. At the Galapagos Islands Davis retrieved the flour put ashore in 1684, none the worse except for the ravages of doves; the rest of the year was spent in cruising, sometimes above but generally below the Line, attacking Peruvian and Chilean ports with small result, the buccaneers now and then withdrawing to some pleasant isle of the Pacific to sun themselves and lick their wounds. Frequently, attacks on little harbours were made for the sake of food as much as for gold; and perhaps because rewards were so scant Captain Knight left Davis towards the end of 1686, and returned to the West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

Christmas was spent at Juan Fernandez, and cruising resumed in the New Year—north and then south again; to port and river mouth and green island, apparently never attacking shipping and never suffering attack. In the autumn of 1687 Davis and his crew took counsel and, making up their minds to return to the Atlantic, began to seek stores for the long southerly passage. Flour, maize, and salted turtle were taken in at the Galapagos Islands, and they sailed on to Juan Fernandez in November; but the Spaniards had again denuded the grassy slopes of the famous goats and no meat was to be had. Nevertheless, five men elected to be put ashore here, and were given a few stores and utensils; one eventually joined a Spanish ship visiting *Más a Tierra*, and the other four remained on the island in security and good health until taken off by Captain Strong in 1690.<sup>2</sup> Davis sailed next to Mocha and Santa Maria islands, found them equally without livestock, but dared not wait longer to obtain supplies, for the only season in which the Horn could be attempted was at hand. But even the summer weather of this inclement region failed them. Driven and buffeted by terrible winds, their ship ran south for three weeks, so much battered that her half-dozen look-outs neither saw Cape Horn

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this is the same Knight who, commanding a 'Brigantine from the West Indies', joined Swan at Madagascar in 1690.

<sup>2</sup> See Sloane MS. 3295.



nor knew when, after turning north again, they entered the Atlantic. Their first landfall, after leaving Santa Maria island in 37 degrees of South latitude, was the hill of Montevideo, on the north coast of the mouth of the Plata river, in almost the same latitude but on the other side of the South American continent. In the interval they had been forced to the sixty-third degree of South latitude, and five hundred leagues west of Argentina. It must have been a strange party, half-clad and half-fed, who tried to kill 'sea-swine' on the hill of Montevideo and chased ostriches on the pampa. But we hear of no grumbling, sickness, or deaths.

From the coast of Brazil Captain Davis navigated his ship to the Caribbean.

#### V. Troubles in Virginia.

The fate of the majority of Davis's crew and of that 'lovely ship' the *Batchelor's Delight* is obscure. It is not even quite certain that it was she who brought them safely from the storms of Cape Horn, for the Negro who later gave evidence against Davis in Virginia said that the vessel used by Davis for raids was the *Emanuel*, a name that suggests a Spanish prize. He may have been confused by the unfamiliar English names. But we can accept Wafer's story that he, Davis, and that old companion of adventure among the Darien Indians, John Hingson, when somewhere in the Caribbean near the West Indian islands, encountered a ship commanded by Captain Edwin Carter, and in her obtained a passage to Pennsylvania. Perhaps Philadelphia was not entirely sympathetic to the trio; for after a short stay they carted their sea-chests, containing the fragments of treasure wrested from a score of attacked Spanish ports and vessels, across land from the river Delaware to the north-east coast of Chesapeake Bay, *en route* for their old resort, Point Comfort in Virginia.

'There', remarks Wafer, 'I thought to settle: but meeting with some troubles, after a three years' residence there, I came home for England in the year 1690.'

His brief and discreet statement has been generally accepted by annotators as it stands; but a search in the Public Record

Office revealed details which the surgeon omitted. For the fact is that he and his companions spent the greater part of their stay in Virginia in the common gaol of Jamestown, and were lucky to avoid a worse fate.

They did not reach land as free men. Times had changed since they were last in the hospitable Virginia. The present Governor, Lord Howard of Effingham, took seriously the task of suppression of piracy, and, indeed, his hand was forced by the activities of Sir Robert Holmes<sup>1</sup>, his fleet and his agents. King James II had, in August, 1687, commissioned Holmes to sail with a squadron for the West Indies to clear the adjacent seas of pirates. Holmes was granted all profits from his or his agents' seizures of privateer vessels, and, possessing wide powers, he and his extremely active deputy, Mr. Stephen Lynch, scoured the Caribbean and borders of the British colonies in North America, made sudden appearances in quiet inlets, and constantly hectorated governors and local councils in a manner that appears extraordinary to-day.

Into the hands of an officer of Holmes's ubiquitous squadron fell our three adventurers, rowed in an open boat by a Negro servant, on a fine day in early June 1688. And to exasperated colonial officials they were delivered for safe-keeping by Captain Simon Rowe of H.M.S. *Dumbarton*, who had stopped

<sup>1</sup> Holmes was at one time a colleague of Pepys, whose early record includes the remark that he saw a baboon brought by Holmes 'from Guiny'. Later, Pepys confided a poor opinion of Holmes to his Diary. On one occasion he calls him 'a rash, proud coxcombe'; of another encounter he notes: 'Capt. Holmes and I by coach to White Hall; in our way, I found him by discourse to be a great friend of my Lord's. . . . He seems to be very well acquainted with the King's mind, and with all the general factions at Court, and spoke all with so much frankness that I do take him to be my Lord's good friend, and one able to do him great service, being a cunning fellow, and one that can put on two several faces and look his enemies in the face with as much love as his friends'.

G. S. Layard, in an article on 'Palimpsest Copper Plates', published in the *Connoisseur*, 1902, writes: 'Any visitor to Yarmouth Church, Isle of Wight, may see an imposing marble effigy of Admiral Sir Robert Holmes, which consists of the head of that gallant sailor surmounting the body of Louis XIV. It appears that Sir Robert, having captured the vessel in which the Italian-made torso of the Grand Monarque was being conveyed to France for the modelling of the head, retained the unfinished work and crowned it with his own august features.'

and arrested the party, accusing them of piracy, and seized their goods.

The three companions declared, later on, that they first met with Captain Thomas Allen, in H.M.S. *Quaker*, while traversing the Bay of Chesapeake; that they knew of the king's proclamation<sup>1</sup> concerning privateers, and, wishing to take advantage of it, surrendered to the officer and received a certificate of immunity. Howard of Effingham, however, examining them after they had been lodged in the gaol of Jamestown, reported to the Council of Trade and Plantations in Whitehall that the only certificate they possessed was a pass from Maryland showing that they were not runaway servants; and that they never saw Captain Allen until after their arrest. They all stoutly denied the charges of piracy, but were, indeed, in serious difficulties. For unless they made the admission, they could not benefit by the King's proclamation and claim pardon; while if they owned that they were pirates, after arrest, their goods, and probably their lives, were forfeit to the eager hands of Sir Robert Holmes.

Lists of the contents of the three sea-chests were drawn up after Captain Rowe had set the buccaneers ashore at Jamestown. The original documents were sent on 9 August 1688 to Lord Sunderland by Lord Howard of Effingham, together with a letter stating that the prisoners had, by that time, changed their attitude and admitted piracy. The papers<sup>2</sup> are headed:

An Accompt. of what Plate and money was seized from Edward Davis, Lionell Dellawafer and John Hincen by Capt. Simon Rowe commanding of his Majesty's shyp *Dumbarton* the 22nd of June, 1688.

Under the heading 'Lionell Dellawafer' is the following:

'In one Bagg, 37 silver plates; two scollops; seaven dishes, silver Lace, some cupps broken. Plate weighing bagg, string and all, 74 lb.

'Three baggs of Spanish money marked L.W., containing 1100 dollars or thereabouts.

'In a chest marked L.W., a peece of cloth and some old things,

<sup>1</sup> Charles II had issued a proclamation against pirates in March 1684; on 22 May 1687 James II renewed the proclamation, also offering pardon under conditions.

<sup>2</sup> *Colonial State Papers* (C.O. 1. 65.), 1688.

with old broken Plate and some little Basons, weighing in all 84 lb.'

Among Edward Davis's belongings the naval captain puts on record three bags of Spanish money; a parcel of broken silver in a small chest, weighing 142 lb.; and includes the items of 'four pair of silke stockings' together with some 'fowle linnen', several pieces of 'Damnyfied ribbon', and 'two paper bookes<sup>1</sup> very materiall to ye matter'. John Hincient had 800 pieces of eight, plate weighing 106 lb., and, in his chest, remnants of linen, and pieces of ribbon of several colours.

The list was made on 26 June, four days after the encounter with Captain Rowe, and is formally signed by three people, Captain Rowe, John Johnson, and William Cole, a member of the Council of Virginia.

Examined by the Virginia authorities, 'Lyonel Delawafer' was not entirely frank.

'Saith that he hath been about seaven years in the West Indies and that his common residence was in Jamaica, and that he used to go out with the traders to trade sometimes with the Spaniards and sometimes with the privateers, but said he never was a privateer himself nor belonged to any. And being asked how he came by his Plate and money said he gott it by trading with the Privateers and Spaniards as aforesaid, and hath been severall years getting it, and about three months since he came from Jamaica to Barbados and thence to Bermudas and traded all the way, and from thence to Pensilvania, thence to the head of the Bay, thence in a shallop to New Point Comfort and then were bound for Elizabeth River and in the way was seized by Captain Rowe, and says he never see Davis before but he has been acquainted with John Hincient 4 or 5 years, and knew him to use the same trade as himself and that they came from Jamaica together and ownes one of the chests and a Bagge containing about 160 lb. weight of plate, and in three baggs about 1100 pieces of eight, 500 of which were sent by him to one William Grinton living in Lyn Haven, being left him by one Timothy Rion [or Lion] dec<sup>d</sup>., and has a chest with cloaths and other things to make cloaths of.

John Hincient was equally innocent of privateering, and he too had never seen Davis before they came to Bermuda; but Peter Cloise the Negro, taken with the three adventurers, whom Davis said he had bought, deposed that he formerly lived among

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, log-books or diaries.

the Spaniards, and that Davis had taken him from them; that he had been with Davis for nine years, and that he commonly went to sea in a ship called the *Emanuel*, of 14 guns, with 100 men, whereof Davis was the commander; that they had taken several ships and plundered 'many towns in Spain'; and what was more, Davis and the other two had sailed together and been comrades for a long time.

It may have been partly due to this evidence that the three found themselves returned to prison. But presently some one—one imagines a sympathizer—found them a clever lawyer, Micaiah Perry, and at his suggestion the comrades changed their original attitude, practically admitted privateering, but said they had come in with the object of surrendering and were therefore not liable to seizure and forfeiture. A petition written to King James II from 'James Town Gaole in Your Majesty's Colony of Virginia', asked that they might take advantage of the Royal Proclamation of 22 January 'in the 3rd year of your reign', which offered a full and gracious pardon to privateers who surrendered within 12 months (extended to 18 months if they were in certain far regions when the news reached them) to Sir Robert Holmes, and gave security for future good behaviour.

The petition ends with a claim for the restoration of the goods of the three. Lionel Wafer's goods are enumerated by himself as 1,158 pieces of eight; 162 lb. of plate and 1½ oz. of gold; several suits of clothes, and 'silks and cloth to the value of 40 lb.' To Davis's list is now added 'A Negro Man'; but the speedy end of Peter Cloise seems to be reflected in the next claims list: 'A negro since dead, £14.'

To more than one document Edward Davis signed his mark, a large E; Hincen (or Hingson) also put his mark, something like a figure 2; but the surgeon signed his full name, 'Lionel Delawafer'.

In October 1688 Lord Sutherland wrote back to the Governor of Virginia, instructing him to prosecute the three prisoners, and to hand over their goods to Holmes. But nothing was done, delay being perhaps partly due to the fact that, as the Governor of Jamaica once reported with a certain acerbity, the official suppressors of piracy were apt to demand help 'in no very

respectful terms'. In particular, Lynch the deputy 'makes things mighty uneasy, for being the King's Privy Seal he is quite independent of authority'.

Davis, Wafer, and Hingson remained in gaol, but the astute lawyer Perry continued to beseech the authorities. In March 1689 a new petition was forwarded to the Council of Trade and Plantations, couched in blandly disarming terms. 'For some years the prisoners had been in the South Seas, and having procured a small quantity of plate and other goods, designed to spend the remainder of their days honestly and quietly. So in May 1688 they arrived at Pennsylvania and after some stay procured a pass and took boat for Patuxen river, where they surrendered to Captain Thomas Allen'. The petition proceeds to relate the arrest of the three adventurers by Captain Rowe (against whom their lawyer presently took out a summons for detention of property!) and begs for the pardon 'which they sought when they surrendered'. The total value of the goods claimed by Edward Davis and his companions is stated as £2,316 19s. In the same month the Governor received a formal demand from one of Holmes's officers, Captain Barry of H.M.S. *Deptford*, for delivery of the plate taken from Edward Davis and others, pirates, and for trial and condemnation of the said pirates, although, the letter adds with precise justice, 'I have power to ask you to release them if found fit objects for mercy, being provided with funds to ship them to England for the King's pardon'.

Replying, the Governor said that he would await the King's decision, for the prisoners declared that their object in coming to Virginia was to surrender, and asked for the benefit of the amnesty. 'Therefore, though I believe them to be great villains, I do not think it right to try them until the King's pleasure is known.' In April 1689, after Howard's departure for England, the Council of Virginia ordered the release of the three buccaneers, on their giving security for good behaviour. They could go to England, and were to be allowed £30 each from their goods for the voyage. But throughout May and June of 1689 they were still in Jamestown prison, and on 8 July another official letter to the Lords of Trade and Plantations detailed the story once more and asked for instructions. Some

time later they were set free, for in September a letter of Philip Ludwell, a redoubtable Virginian, enumerates among other grievances the case of 'three men who came in June 1688 from the South Sea to surrender under the King's proclamation, but were imprisoned without bail or trial, and their goods detained, until the Governor's departure, when they were released to the great danger of the community.'

Wafer and his friends, although at liberty in Jamestown, were still unable to obtain their 'small quantity of plate' or a decision regarding their case, until June 1690, when Francis Nicholson, who had succeeded as Governor in May, sent for and examined them. He ordered that their debts should be paid out of their goods, that they should be sent to England, and that the property still in the hands of Captain Rowe should also be sent to England. A month later an order was made for money to be allowed to 'Edward Davis and his accomplices', and soon afterwards Lionel Wafer was back in England, after nearly eleven years' absence.

The three companions did not intend to lose the fruits of their long journeyings. One of their first acts was to draw up a petition to King William (dated November 1690) ingenuously relating how, in April 1688, 'while returning from the South Sea we met a ship which told us of the King's Proclamation offering pardon to pirates who should surrender'; how they immediately shipped their goods for James River, and, a week after surrendering to Captain Allen, were seized and put in irons by Captain Rowe. Examination of their case, they said, was delayed by the capture of some papers by the French, and since they came back to England they have inquired for their goods, but cannot find that Governor Nicholson had given the order to have them sent to England, 'and fear it may be but a pretext to deprive us of our goods. We beg for pardon and the restitution of our property.'

The matter was referred to Lord Howard of Effingham, who replied that the three were indeed 'notorious pirates'. 'I beg the Treasury to take over the goods and acquit me of them', said he. Part, at least, of the silver seized by Rowe had been brought home by Captain Purvis. At this moment Sir Robert Holmes, balked of his legitimate prey, intervened again, demanding that

the three should be sent back to Virginia for trial; but fate had meanwhile removed two of their accusers. The Spanish Ambassador, who had been preparing a *dossier* against them, had died; and Captain Barry had been drowned in the *Deptford*. Perhaps, too, Davis and Wafer had sympathizers at court, for in January of 1691 Lord Sydney was asked to see the new Spanish Ambassador and to discover if he had any objection to their goods being restored. In February the Lords of Trade and Plantations reported that they considered Edward Davis and his companions had intended to surrender, and therefore had a right to the seized goods. In April the Council of Virginia was instructed to send to England the property of the three men still in Jamestown; in May another petition was presented to the Lords of Trade and Plantations for the money and goods 'now in the custody of the Commissioners of Customs'; but although restitution was ordered, nothing was actually handed over, for in both June and July new petitions were made, the last begging for despatch as the appellants were 'threatened with a miserable fate in prison'.

The petition was submitted to the Queen in Council, in the same month as a memorandum stating that the Lords of Trade and Plantations considered that Davis and his friends had intended to surrender, and that their goods should be restored. But Holmes was not yet silenced. Writing from Bath in August, he claimed 'certain silver in the custody of the Treasury' and regretted that Davis is 'countenanced in England, where the gallows is too good a reward for him'.

In September Davis, Wafer, and Hingson petitioned again to the Queen. 'Captain John Purvis, who brought our silver from Virginia, tells us that if his bill of lading for same be returned to him he will deliver us what money he has in his custody, provided he receive quittance for that which he delivered to the Treasury.' In December yet another petition was filed.

Finally, in March of 1692, a royal order decided that their goods were to be handed over to the trio, with the exception of £300 which was, together with a fourth part of the amount still in Jamestown, to be 'applied to the building of a college in Virginia, or to such other charitable objects as the King shall



direct'. The college built later on York River in Virginia, and named after its promoters 'King William's and Queen Mary's', thus may owe something to Wafer the surgeon-buccaneer. But the matter of realizing the residue was not cleared up for some time after the royal decree; for in November 1693 the Council of Virginia was inviting creditors of Davis, Wafer, and Hingson to present their claims—presumably, before parting with whatever was due to the three buccaneers.

### *VI. Wafer and the Scots Darien Venture*

Wafer resided in London during the next year or two, while preparing the *New Voyage* for the press, probably living on the ultimate proceeds of the silver plate from his sea-chest. His next adventure was in connexion with the Scots plan for establishing a colony in Darien. This idea grew from the Act passed by the Scots Parliament in 1693 for 'Encouraging Foreign Trade'; and was directed towards the Isthmus of Panama by William Paterson, originator of the scheme upon which the Bank of England was founded in 1694, and a director of the institution. Paterson had spent some years in the West Indies and was a friend of Sir Alan Brodrick, whose cousin was the famous William Brodrick of Jamaica, Attorney-General of the island at various periods. Probably Paterson had heard while in the Caribbean of the various crossings of Darien by buccaneers; it has been frequently suggested that he met there some of the experienced sea-captains and weighed with them the chances of establishing a foothold on the Isthmus.

In 1695 Paterson, with Fletcher of Saltoun, organized the 'Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies'. It was first promised protection, and then repudiated, by William III. But it had a wide appeal to all Scots, and particularly perhaps to those who, as in the case of Fletcher of Saltoun, were still smarting from the reverses of Monmouth's rebellion. The organization of trade with the East Indies was comparatively simple; English, Portuguese, and Dutch had been adventuring freely in eastern waters for over a century; the door was not shut. But looking westward to the New World tropics, to the Isthmus that was the 'key of the universe', as Paterson said, the

barrier of Spanish policy was raised against enterprise. This barrier had been forced by one class alone, the international buccaneers. Their stories were the unique source of information; and they only could command the friendship of the native tribes of that veiled region.

Paterson sought, or perhaps renewed, acquaintance with Dampier (returned to England in 1691 from the east), and it was from Dampier that Paterson obtained a copy of Wafer's journal,<sup>1</sup> which he presented to the Scots Company.

Rumour of this objective of the Scots Company was wafted to the ears of the Lords of Trade and Plantations; and in June 1697 Dampier was called before the Council and asked what he knew of Darien, and of the Scots' plan. Dampier replied that not he, but a certain surgeon, Lionel Wafer, knew Darien well; he was asked to attend again, with Mr. Wafer, and the two friends appeared on 2 July before the Commissioners. Lord Tankerville, John Locke, Abraham Hill of the Royal Society, and Sir Philip Meadows, were present. By these gentlemen Wafer was asked a number of questions about the Panama Isthmus, and later drew up and sent them 'An Answer to Queries proposed by the Honble. Council of Trade'. Proof that the Scots scheme was regarded seriously, and as something which it would be prudent for the English to check, is given by the fact that on 10 September 1697 the Commissioners recommended to the Lords Justices that 'competent men' should be sent from London or Jamaica to take possession of Golden Island and the adjacent port for the Crown of England.<sup>2</sup> Dampier and Wafer both said that 500 men could settle safely in Darien.

Wafer had meanwhile achieved so much of fame that Fletcher of Saltoun thought it worth while to seek out the surgeon, entertaining him at the celebrated Pontack's, in company with Pennycook, a Scot in the Company's confidence. Herries,<sup>3</sup> who tells the whole story of Wafer's commerce with

<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Dampier, in Sloane MS. 3236.

<sup>2</sup> One result of this recommendation was the appearance of Captain Long off the Darien coast just about the time of the arrival of the first Scots expedition.

<sup>3</sup> *A Defence of the Scots Abdicating Darien, &c.*

the Scots Company, says that Wafer was 'in terms with some private merchants of London, about sending a vessel thither [to Darien] for Nicaragua wood, to which he was to pilot them'—the grove of red dye-wood which Lacenta had shown him in 1681. Wafer was asked 'not to be hasty in publishing his book', and there was 'a collection of some guineas amongst these gentlemen for Wafer, the better to back their advice'.

Pennycook, returning to Scotland, acquainted the Secret Committee (who did not confide in Paterson) with his opinion of Wafer's ability, and a letter was sent to Fletcher in London asking him to secure the surgeon 'for the Companies service, and to make the easiest bargain he could'. Negotiations were carried out by Dr. John Munro, an agent of the Company in London, who invited the surgeon to engage himself for a 'modest wage'. Wafer had asked for a thousand pounds, but now agreed to serve the Company for two years at a fee of £750, of which £50 was to be paid down; and he likewise agreed to go at once to Edinburgh to answer the questions of the Private Committee. Twenty guineas more were given him at once, on consideration of his book being held up for one month. 'If the Company and he could not come to terms for suppressing it altogether, then he was either at liberty to go in their service for the foresaid £700 or to return to England, which he pleased'.

So, in the spring of 1698, the buccaneer-surgeon lately of the *Batchelor's Delight*, and now Mr. Brown of London, took horse for Scotland. Herries proceeds:

'Mr. Wafer, Pursuant to the Contract (having order'd his Affairs in England for his Voyage to Darien), took Post for Scotland, and on the Road past by the Name of Brown, by the Committees Directions. He was stopt at Haddinton, 12 Miles short of Edinburgh by Mr. Pennycook who was order'd to Lodge him at Mr. Fletchers House, about 2 Miles Wide of that Road, and there he was to stay till the Committee should come to him, least by his going into Edinburgh he should be seen by Paterson or Lodge (who at this time were kept in the Dark as to the Companies Resolutions), or by any other Person that might know him. The Private Committee came to him next day, and having enter'd on business, askt him first, if he had order'd his Affairs so in England that he needed not return. He Answered that he had, and was ready to go aboard at

48 hours warning: to this they reply'd that it was very well, tho' by the Sequel of the story you'll find it none of their meaning.

'During the first 2 or 3 days Conferences the Subject of the discourse was Darien, of which he unbosom'd himself freely. And for their further incouragement, he ingaged to lead them to a Treasure of Nicaragua Wood, whereof 300 Men could cut down so much in six Months, as should defray the whole Charge of the Expedition, which if he did not perform he should forfeit his Title to the 700 l. Premium agreed on. The Gentlemen were curious in Informing themselves whereabouts this Treasure was, whether it was near the Sea or any River whence it could be easily shipt Aboard. Wafer, not suspecting any design upon him by Persons of so noted Characters, resolv'd them in every particular and pointed out the very spot of Ground, where it grows, with the bearings and distance of it from Golden Island. They now thinking themselves Cok-sure of the Treasure, and sufficiently Instructed as to the Country, had no more occasion for Wafer, and believ'd that the 700 l. Pilotage might be sav'd, to help to Fetch up Smiths Summ.

'Next Night he was brought into Edinbrough under Pretence of a nearer Communication, and was Lodg'd in a private Cell near the Companies Office Three Pair of Stairs high, where he could scarce distinguish between Sun Light and Moon Light; and here he was oblig'd to keep close least by being seen abroad the Project should take Air. Wafer was wellenough pleas'd with his confinement, having still the 700 l. in View; but as there's no certainty in Sub-lunary things, so the Pilot mist of his mark; for in a day or 2 afterwards some Gentlemen of the Committee came to him and with abundance of concern made him understand that the Project had taken Wind in England, and Admiral Bembo was Lying with a Squadron at Spithead to wait their motion, and that it was resolv'd that very Morning in the Secret Committee to alter their Darien Project.'

Wafer was somewhat daunted at this news, says Herries, and had but little to say, answering 'no' to their questions, put 'to blind him the more' regarding the possibility of his serving them in the Amazon or Plata regions:

'Thus they parted from him, shewing a great concern for their own Disappointment, as well as his; telling him withal, That since they could not go in his Darien Project, they would think of a gratuity fit for him which he might expect that evening.

'This Gratuity was the Summ of 20 Guineas, which he receiv'd

by the hand of Mr. Pennycook. And I suppose he was now at Liberty to Print his Book, for I think he was never so much as Commun'd with about it. I was order'd to see him out of Town, which gave me an Opportunity of having the Mournful story Recapitulated, whereof neither he nor I at that time knew the Draught. It was not Necessary to enjoin Wafer to Conceal his Scotch Journey from the English, his own interest obliging him to keep it hush, since the greatest remedy he could expect was to be Laught at. However, I dare say he hath acquired so little Knowledge of Edinburgh (except what he Learn'd of the Company) that if he were to return to that City he could no more find the way to his Lodging, than the Company could to the Nicaragua Wood, Notwithstanding they thought themselves so sure of it by Directions.'

Herries' book, quoted above, printed in 1700, after his return from Darien, was primarily an attack on the directors of the Scots Company; the response to it which concerns most the biographer of Wafer was published later in the same year in Glasgow: it was called *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Mis-carriage of the Scots Colony at Darien, or an answer to . . . A defence of the Scots abdicating Darien &c.* In the course of a bitter attack on Herries' book the *Defence*, the author of the *Inquiry* remarks:

'The next Proof we have of his Falshood and Malice, is his long Story about Mr. Wafer, from Page 38 to 45, wherein he does so blend Truth with Falshood, as shews he had a mind at any rate to bespatter the Reputation of the Committee of the Company: the said Committee knew nothing of those Gentlemens treating with Wafer at London, till they acquainted them with it, and it was only upon their Recommendation that they sent for him. As to their Collecting any Guineas at Pontack's for Mr. Wafer, it is altogether false. The Articles were drawn by Mr. James Campbel the Merchant, now in London, and wrote by Mr. FitzGerald an Irish Merchant, who both can testify that this Matter is foully misrepresented; for Mr. Wafer had an Alternative propos'd to him, which he agreed to, viz. to have so much if the Company thought fit to imploy him, and so much for his trouble and pains if they did not; the Company was so far from standing in any need of his Book, that they had a Manuscript<sup>1</sup> of it before ever they saw him, which was altogether unknown to the Gentlemen that treated with him at London; this he himself knows to be true, and that to his no small surprize, they repeated

<sup>1</sup> This was a copy of Wafer's *Journal*, presented to the Committee by Paterson.

several Passages out of it to him, and indeed the Manuscript is more particular than his Book, whatever Cause he hath since had to make any Alterations in it we know not. The Company upon the whole, finding that he could inform them of no thing considerable more than what was in the Manuscript, and that he could do them no great Service, left him at his Liberty to publish his Book when he pleas'd, gave him about 100 l. first and last for his Pains and Expence, with which he was very well satisfied, and hath declared several times since that the Company dealt very honourably with him, tho Mr. H——s took a great deal of pains to make him publish a Memoire to the contrary, which by his honest Friend Mr. Fitzgerald's Advice he desisted from doing. As to the Libeller's malicious Insinuation that they had no further Service for him when once he had discovered the place where the Nicaragua-Wood grew, it is absolutely false, for the Manuscript they had was very particular in that. This Mr. Wafer knows to be true, and if he have but a just resentment, he is equally concern'd to vindicate himself; for the Libeller reflects as much upon him as upon the Company, when he charges him with putting a Cheat upon them, as to their Nicaragua-Wood, P. 44. which H——s says he and others went in search of, for several Miles along the Coast, but could find none; and yet he magnifies Wafer's Freedom, and being ingenious by informing them so particularly, as to the place where the Nicaragua-Wood Grew, P. 41. So perpetually does this malicious Libeller contradict himself. As to the other parts of his Story of Mr. Wafers being conceal'd near Haddington, and afterwards at Edinburgh; it was no more than what Prudence would have directed any Men to do in the like Circumstances: the Company not knowing till after having discours'd him whether he could do them any Service or not; it was not their Wisdom to expose him to publick View; and having found that he could not serve them, it was equally prudent in them to keep him at an uncertainty as to their design; they being under no obligation to acquaint him with it.'

In spite of the 'prudence' exercised during Wafer's stay in Scotland, his visit did not escape official knowledge. Hardly was the buccaneer-surgeon back in London before the Council of Trade and Plantations read with grave faces a letter, veiled in anonymity, alleging 'much tampering [by the Scots Company] with some in London, especially one Mr. Waffer. I am sure', continued the writer, 'overtures have been made to him, though I find no encouragement he has given them yet, but whether

this be from respect to his country or from expectation of a gratuity from you upon the publication of his book I know not. I am certain that money has been offered to him and things discoursed to him, so I desire he be examined forthwith, for the Scotch ships will sail in less than a month's time.'

Blaythwait, Secretary of the Council of Trade and Plantations, had heard rumours, too; so Dampier was called up and questioned, on 13 July 1698.<sup>1</sup> Did he know anything of bribes offered to Wafer by the Scots? Dampier, sardonic as usual, replied that he knew nothing, adding grimly that he did not think Mr. Wafer capable of doing the Scots any great service.

In the same month of July the first Scots expedition left Leith, with Pennycook as Commodore. Walter Herries seems to have occupied a modest post: he had been purser of the *Caledonia* when the fleet was lying off Hamburg in the winter of 1697-8. Wafer, luckily for himself, remained behind in London, seeing his book through the press.

The Scots fleet of three major ships, the *St. Andrew* (Captain Robert Pennycook, Commodore), the *Unicorn* (Captain Robert Pinkerton), and the *Caledonia* (Captain Robert Drummond), accompanied by the *Endeavour* pink, and the *Dolphin* snow (a French prize, of ten guns; formerly the *St. Louis*), were badly found. Provisions were poor and scant, and forty-four people died on the passage from Leith. They were bound for Darien, but this destination remained unknown until Crab Island, near Anguilla,<sup>2</sup> was reached, the sealed orders opened, and their aim, the 'key of the universe,' realized.<sup>3</sup> A pilot immediately offered himself in the person of Captain Alliston, who had been with Sharp at the time of the Isthmian crossing, now 'one of the eldest Privateers now alive', remarks Hugh Rose in his *Journal*.<sup>4</sup> He 'freely offered to go with us to Golden Island' and after terrible storms, such as Columbus had ex-

<sup>1</sup> Three weeks later Dampier was dining at Pepys' house, 6 August 1698. Evelyn, also a guest, records the fact.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Windward group.

<sup>3</sup> 'It must be owned', wrote Macpherson later in the *Annals of Commerce*, 'that supposing all Europe but themselves to be fast asleep, the very advantageous situation of their colony . . . seemingly promised, sooner or later, the accomplishment of most of the great things they had in view.'

<sup>4</sup> *The Darien Papers*, edited by Burton, 1849.

perienced on this coast 200 years previously, with contrary winds, deluges of rain, and lightning that almost blinded the crew, four vessels limped into the shelter of Golden Island on 30 October. The little *Dolphin* was missing; she had been wrecked off Cartagena, and crew and settlers imprisoned by the Spanish authorities. The officials were, later on, sent to Seville, where they were sentenced to death for piracy, but eventually released.<sup>1</sup>

Two boat-loads of Indians at once came to visit the Scots. They were headed by an old Indian friend of buccaneers, Captain Andreas, who sang the praises of Captains Davis and Swan, who, he said 'were his particular friends'. To celebrate the occasion, the Indians 'got drunk and lay aboard all night'.

On 3 November the leaders of the Scots expedition landed on the shore opposite Golden Island and 'took possession' of the mainland, their Indian friends showing complaisance. All the native folk<sup>2</sup> of Darien, they declared, were now at war with the Spaniards, although there had been a temporary truce. Yet another famous character now appeared, Captain Tristian, the Frenchman, who, shipwrecked off the Darien coast, had been forced, he said, to 'live a great while among the Indians'. He spoke the Cuna language, liked the country, and said that he found it healthy.<sup>3</sup> Farther west, near the mouth of the Concepción river, a colony of French *flibustiers* was living, married to Cuna wives.

The Scots, who found the land 'extraordinary good, full of stately trees for all uses, and full of pleasant birds', went inland 3 leagues to Ambrosio's house, and were received in state by

<sup>1</sup> Due to the intervention of William III. They reached England early in 1701.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh Rose's Journal gives details of the small chieftainships of the Indians of the day. Diego was now the most important of the clan leaders, ruling from the Gulf of Urabá to Caret Bay; Paussigo, brother in law of Andreas and an 'Indian clergyman', (probably, a Nele or Paramount Magician), from Caret Bay to Golden Island; hence, westward to the Isle of Pines, Andreas and his brother Pedro; Ambrosio, who had lived at Petit Guaves and spoke French as well as Spanish, ruled the rivers 'Bonones, Mango, and Cocost'; San Blas (Point) to the river Concepción, was ruled by Corbet; then Nicolas, 'to the Spanish border', probably near Porto Bello.

<sup>3</sup> *William Paterson the Merchant*: Saxe Bannister, 1838.



the chief with 29 followers, all in loose white robes, fringed at the bottom; the house was 90 feet long, and 40 people lived there. The feast of plantains, potatoes, wild hog, partridges, fish, tortoises, and coconuts, seemed delicious to the Scots. A treaty was made with Andreas, the strip of coast opposite Golden Island was named Caledonia, and Balboa's sweet-water stream, the Akala or Agla, became the Caledonia river. Fort St. Andrew was built on the little rocky spur still retaining the name of Punta Escoces (Scotch Point), a dyke, still to be seen, cut across the narrow neck of the coral-rock peninsula, and the sea let in to guard the town of New Edinburgh, formally established on the point. A bridge, with fifty guns to guard it, was built over the dyke. The settlers, a fine body of men, began to set up houses of cane and thatch, as Balboa's companions had done two centuries previously at the nearby site of Acla.

Hector Mackenzie's letter, written on 21 December, shows the beginning of disillusionment. Rains, out of season, deluged the colony; fifteen people had died, including Paterson's wife.<sup>1</sup> And although they were scarcely aware of hostility, the Spaniards were not the only enemies keenly observing the embryo settlement. Captain Long in the *Rupert* prize, apparently happening to sail into Caledonia harbour by chance, had come from Jamaica commissioned to report on the colony. He had already, 'though no hater of the Scots nation', taken steps to annex Darien, if unclaimed by Spain, to the English Crown, landing in the Gulf of Urabá and planting a flag and leaving four men to guard it. Jamaican planters, he wrote later, looked askance at Caledonia because they foresaw the desertion of labourers, if gold mines should be opened up by the Scots. Governor Beeston, acting under instructions from London, issued a proclamation forbidding any traffic with the Scots on the part of any English colony in the New World; and the French, from Louisiana, suggested to the Spanish that they should act in concert in forcibly expelling the Scots from the Darien main. The Spanish, however, temporized; the resuscitated Barlovento fleet was sent to reconnoitre, hung about Golden Island, but

<sup>1</sup> Paterson, ignored by the Company's committee, had nevertheless sailed in a private capacity; but his mind became almost unhinged by trouble in Darien. He returned to Edinburgh in December 1699.

sailed away without making any attack, the commodore perhaps agreeing with Long's opinion that the Scots were 'in such a crabbed hole that it may be difficult to beat them out of it'. The Governor of Santa Maria town, in the gold region, wrote a courteous letter to the 'Illustrious Council of Caledonia', and awaited events.

Meanwhile the Scots were able to obtain no gold; and a search for the famous red dyewood<sup>1</sup> proved fruitless. Pennycook, says in his *Journal*<sup>2</sup> that he, with Pinkerton and Alliston, went on 26 November and searched 'the River of Agara (Aglá) for the Nicaragua wood, being about a mile and a half from Golden Island. On the 27th Captain Pinkerton and I returned and told them we could find none of that wood.' Herries seems to have been with the party; he says in the *Defence* that he was one of those 'who went for several Miles along the Coast in Search of this Treasure, but were oblig'd to give it o'er. And in lieu of this our Men were order'd to fell several kinds of strange Trees which Naturally grow in the Collonies Garden.' It was necessary that a confidential report should be made to Edinburgh; so Hamilton and Cuninghame got back to Jamaica in mid-January by a sloop leaving Caledonia Bay on 29 December, and thence reached Bristol on 18 March, arriving in Edinburgh to meet the Company's directors on 25 March 1699. Walter Herries was with them as far as Bristol, making for London. He says that when he parted from Major Cuninghame the latter requested him 'to write nothing to Scotland in prejudice of the Darien project', and received a promise of silence for the space of two months.

The directors were not discouraged by the reports they received. During the year another 1,600 settlers set sail for Darien; the *Olive Branch* and the *Hopeful Binning of Bo'ness*,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Europe still paid prices that would be considered enormous to-day for substances yielding a fine red colour. The first good red dye came from India, obtained from the tree *Caesalpinia sappan*; it was called *brasilium* on account of its fiery hue, and the word *brasil* or *bresil*, later applied to any wood yielding a red dye, is recorded from the middle of the 12th century. The dyewood found in Bahia (and hence the name Brazil) is *Caesalpinia echinata*.

<sup>2</sup> *Darien Shipping Papers*, edited by Insh.

<sup>3</sup> Borrowstounness, on the right bank of the River Forth (almost opposite the present Rosyth), and then the third port in Scotland.

carrying some 300 people, arrived off Punta Escoces in August 1699 to find the huts and fort of Caledonia silent and deserted. In June, the survivors of the first expedition had abandoned the colony, leaving 300 dead—from exposure, fever, and bad food—on the green Darien coast; 400 others died on the way to New York or Jamaica. The *Endeavour* was abandoned at sea; the *Unicorn* in New York. The *St. Andrew* made her way to Jamaica; only the *Caledonia* returned to Scotland, from New York, in November, 1699.

Of the new arrivals, a few only stayed ashore, the rest deciding to return to Jamaica; but the *Olive Branch* took fire, and the *Hopeful Binning*, with all the rest of the settlers aboard, ran aground off the Jamaican coast. Many died, but a handful of survivors made names and fortunes in the West Indies. Long before the story of the disaster could be known in Europe, four more vessels had sailed from the Clyde; the *Rising Sun*, the *Hope*, the *Duke of Hamilton*, and the *Hope of Bo'ness*, with 1,300 people aboard. They reached Golden Island in November 1699, to find weeds and lianes covering the site of New Edinburgh. News of their predecessors came with the entry into the bay of a little vessel sent from New York with supplies. The settlers landed and tried to organize. The best season of Darien had begun; the Indians seemed friendly; but they neither wanted the Scots' goods<sup>1</sup> nor had gold to barter. As for the natives' hatred for the Spanish, said a letter<sup>2</sup> of the Second Council, written in December 1699, 'they would gladly plunder them, as no doubt they would do us, if the Spanish would help them'; but the Indians would need a good deal of help in such case, 'for they are people of low stature and weak-like, and a Scots granadeer would find it no hard work to defeat ten of them'. The Council decided that, to plant the indigo, cochineal, tobacco, and sugar that was to make their fortunes, they would need Negro labour and must build a good port. Any practical plans were rendered hopeless by internal dissensions between Captain Drummond and Governor Byres; and by external action by the Spanish. Instructions sent from

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, hostile to the Scots Company, says that the ships carried periwigs, Bibles, and bales of woollen cloth among the cargo.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Darien Papers*, edited by Burton.

London forbidding intercourse with the Scots on the part of any English colony were unnecessary.

The authorities of Spain on the Isthmus had waited for, and seen with relief, the speedy end of the first expedition; but the arrival of a second and third fleet showed determination that roused the Spanish to action.<sup>1</sup> Troops were hastily collected and sent to Darien; and one morning the settlers saw Spanish ships of war riding off Golden Island. Refusing the Spanish commander's demand to surrender, the colonists mustered their fever-stricken forces, and in February 1700 inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Spanish troops on the Tubuganti river. But the situation was hopeless; New Edinburgh was attacked from sea and land; and on 31 March the Scots capitulated with the honours of war. All survivors were permitted to embark, on 11 April 1700. Ill fortune had not finished with them. The *Rising Sun* was lost off Charleston with all on board; the *Duke of Hamilton* was also wrecked, but her passengers and crew saved; the *Hope of Bo'ness* developed a leak, was taken into Cartagena harbour, and sold to the Spaniards. Of the third expedition only 360 men survived, dispersed in the British colonies of the New World. Many became eminent in Jamaica. A few made their way back to Scotland.

Of the dismay and anger felt in Scotland it is unnecessary to speak here; but, although resentment was directed more against England than against either the Spaniards or the mismanagement of the Company's directors, from the unhappy affair one good result can be recorded, the passing of the Act of Union between England and Scotland. The two crowns had been united for a century; but the different political aims and alliances of the sister countries caused constant dissension. King William, reproached for his share in the troubles of the Company of Scotland, pointed out the advantages of union; and when this end was accomplished in 1707 the Bank of England paid into the Bank of Scotland the sum of £398,085 10s., from which fund the Scots Company was paid for acquisition of its private rights; to the original capital<sup>2</sup> was added interest at five per

<sup>1</sup> Captain Patrick Macdowall heard that the Pope was so much incensed that he had a design 'for paunding all his Church plate to hire troops to drive us out of our settlement'. <sup>2</sup> Stated by Insh as £153,448 5s. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. actually paid in.

cent. Some of the sufferers from the Darien disaster were thus pecuniarily compensated. But in Darien the Indians emerged from the woods and mountains into which they had withdrawn while the white men quarrelled, to look upon the graves and ruined huts of New Edinburgh as they had looked upon the ashes of Santa Maria, of Santa Cruz, of San Sebastian and of Acla.

### VII. *Publication of the 'New Voyage'*

Wafer makes no mention of the Scots' Darien venture in the preface or dedication of the first edition of his *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*. It was published some time in 1699, when the sailing of several ships was certainly known, and public interest excited. It is reasonable to suppose that the affairs of the Scots Company played a part in making the volume famous. The book appeared in a beautiful binding, well printed by James Knapton, at the Crown in St. Paul's churchyard. There were three copper-plate illustrations of Darien Indians, and Dampier allowed the reproduction of his map. No less a person than Henry, Earl of Romney, intimate of the King, permitted its dedication to him; and the book seems to have been always highly regarded.

Comparing the passages of Wafer's original journal, as quoted by Dampier in Sloane MS. 3236, with the book printed in 1699, it becomes evident that sentences have been smoothed, statements modified, here and there. One perceives the shadow of a hand equipped with a sure and discreet pencil moving across the manuscript of the surgeon-buccaneer, stabilizing spelling, inserting a telling phrase, suppressing untimely facetiousness, always making the most of a subject likely to appeal to readers yet deleting extravagances: the hand, in fact, of a competent sub-editor. Its outline seems clearer yet when one observes that Wafer's 'Secret Report' on South American coasts, printed for the first time in the present volume, bears a strong resemblance in orthography and style to the original journal. Many books or pamphlets were published about the time of the Scots' venture in Darien, purporting to give information regarding the country, suddenly famous. Most of them took, with or without acknowledgement, the bulk of their material from

Wafer or Ringrose, and, even when a first-hand origin is alleged, little reliance can be placed upon the claim. The author of *A Letter giving a Description of the Isthmus of Darien (where the Scots colonie is settled) From a gentleman who lives there at present* gives some interesting details of Cuna customs, but quotes almost word for word from paragraphs of Ringrose, and disposes of his own claim for accuracy by speaking of 'the coconut, of which chocolate is made'; the 'plantine or sugar-cane of which they make sugar' and 'potatoes, which make a drink called maize'. This work was published in Edinburgh in 1699.

*The History of Caledonia, or the Scots Colony in Darien, by a Gentleman lately arrived*, issued in the same year in London, owed much to Wafer; but the author has an interesting account of the dinner given to Paterson, who made a 'short and pithy speech' to the noble Indian host; says that the Indians agreed to send a number of their young boys to Edinburgh 'to learn the Scottish language'; and describes the port of 'New St. Andrew' with the detail of an eye witness.

The above-mentioned were published while the Scots venture was still no more to the general public in England than a high-spirited attempt with which any curious person would sympathize. But when doubts, and substantiation of doubts, of success, attacked the Company, books issued in Scotland took on a different flavour. A Spanish memorial against the foundation of the settlement had been issued; and in 1699 a well-argued reply was printed in Edinburgh, *A Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darien*. This was attributed to Archibald Foyer. In much more heated terms came, next, *A Defence of the Scots Abdicating Darien* by Walter Herries, published [Edinburgh?] in 1700, attacking the directors of the Company. A counter-attack, issued in the same year in Glasgow, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Miscarriage of the Scots Colony at Darien* assailed 'some Gentlemen that perhaps may be found within the Verge of White Hall' so fiercely that the annoyed English Parliament ordered the book to be burnt by the common hangman in Palace Yard, Westminster, on 19 January 1701.

Eliot Warburton's romance, *Darien, or the Merchant Prince*, exemplified the popular idea of the experiences of northern-bred

folk in luscious tropical regions, where 'cold, hunger, nakedness had no more terrors for them than in Paradise. Glowing sunshine or mellow night were always theirs—the richest fruits hung around them, fishes of all shapes and hues swarmed in their waters.'

Lovers of unusual travel, who are many, and ethnographers, comparatively few, have always recognized the book of Lionel Wafer as important.

Readers of 1699 felt keenly the international conditions leading to constant changes of partners among the four great European nations of the times—England, France, Spain, and Holland; and discussed the causes and results of the wars that created alterations in alliances all over the map of their world. To-day one may be forgiven for a reminder that during the time when Wafer and his companions were in the Caribbean and the 'South Sea' thrones were shaken in Europe. Charles II of England died; James II assumed the crown and lost it; William of Orange and Queen Mary came from Holland. Monmouth's rebellion, the death of Louis XIV, the shadow of the War of the Spanish Succession—each change had its influence upon events in the New World. There, every movement of the European scene appeared to result in a further incursion of non-Spanish nations into the jealously-guarded Americas.

Spain had not kept her vast territories intact for much more than a century. The French had occupied islets, near Española, and raided part of the island itself, during the sixteenth century; Hawkins, Drake, and Raleigh, if they retained no territory for England, had shown the way into forbidden Spanish waters. Settlements in North America, in regions never occupied by Spain, did not satisfy the English ambitions of the following century. Harcourt had settled a colony on the north of South America, at Guiana, in 1609, three years after Virginia, on the North American main, had been 'planted'; St. Christopher's was colonized in 1623; Tobago, in 1625; Barbados, finally and without opposition, in 1625; and Nevis soon afterwards. Old Providence island, off Nicaragua, was settled by English in 1630; Antigua and Montserrat were occupied by British from 'St. Kitt's' in 1632. Before the end of the reign of Charles I not only had the British broken down the wall of territorial

monopoly, but the French (in Tortuga, Guadeloupe, Santa Lucia, Martinique, and on the coast of Guiana) and the Dutch (Berbice, Essequibo, Saba, St. Eustatius, Curaçao) had colonized territory within nominally Spanish waters. What is more, the English had been active, where and when they could, in commerce from the time when Elizabeth had granted a charter to a West Indian Trading Company in 1564; the first Dutch West India Company was incorporated in 1621; the French had had a *Compagnie des Isles de l'Amérique* from 1626. With the stimulus given to English enterprise by the taking of Jamaica by Penn and Venables under Cromwell's orders,<sup>1</sup> and the progressive growth of British, French, and Dutch colonies in North America, larger shares of trade with the Spanish-American colonies came into non-Spanish hands. After the expulsion of Moor and Jew from continental Spain, great soldiers and law-givers distinguished the Spanish nation; but manufacturing and trading circles in Spain were unable to supply the needs of the peninsular population, apart from demands from the New World colonies. Before Wafer's time, the agents of French, English, and Dutch merchants had been admitted to Seville, and were not only supplying about half the goods consumed within Spanish borders, but at least two-thirds of the merchandise shipped to Spanish-America. In order to comply with the regulations of the Council of the Indies, goods were generally shipped in the names of Spanish merchants; but these conditions offered a fertile ground for irritation, and it is hardly surprising to find that the records of 1681 include accounts of the visit made to the West Indies and Spanish colonies of the Main by the Comte d'Estrées, sent by Louis XIV to report upon the vulnerability of ports, in case French merchants should have grounds for complaint concerning shipments of goods in Spanish vessels, and the sale of such goods.

The development and growth of buccaneering, heartily and progressively disliked by every class of honest international merchant may be ascribed to political rather than economic conditions. Colonies were at war when the mother country overseas was at war; and while loot was the sign and proof of a

<sup>1</sup> Influenced by Gage's *New Survey of the West Indies*, published in 1648.



successful achievement, the pleasure of humiliating a racial and religious antagonist provided a constant spur. The French, from an island stronghold, Petit Guaves, on the very margin of Española, Spain's premier island colony, began first as robbers and *boucaniers* of half-wild cattle, next as permanent settlers, and open aggressors against Spanish towns. But neither English, Dutch, nor Danish hesitated to follow the example, nor to attack each other when political alliances in Europe shifted; letters of marque educated sober ships' captains to become buccaneers.

Between 1699 and 1704, when a second edition of his book was called for, Wafer was living in London; perhaps in Wapping, haunt of sea-rovers. He may have witnessed the tragic end of Captain Kidd, from Execution Dock, in 1702. Whatever his circumstances, he was in touch with both great men and buccaneers, for the original slim volume was now enlarged by two additions; one of these, contributed by a 'Member of the Royal Society', gave a remarkable but almost entirely apocryphal account of the flora and fauna of the Isthmus of Panama; the second, written by one Nathaniel Davis, is the story of another Isthmian crossing and attack upon Santa Maria, occurring in the year 1703. Wafer saw this second edition through the press; the dedication was again accepted by a nobleman, John, Duke of Marlborough, and it seems possible that Wafer had been again in touch with Paterson, for like that indefatigable economist, now recovered from the Darien disaster and full of plans, he returns to the charge about the possibility of an English settlement in Darien. It is, he writes, 'one of the most valuable parts of the world', since in addition to its natural wealth, a 'free passage by land from the Atlantick to the South Sea' would be guaranteed. The miscarriage of the Scots in Darien, he says 'can be no discouragement to England, since we have at hand, within our own plantations, provisions and everything else useful for subsistence'. The French, he urges, also want control of the Isthmus, and therefore, 'it highly imports England to prevent them, by endeavouring to become masters of this neck of land'.

<sup>1</sup> The French first took permanent possession of Tortuga Island, and later built a town on Petit Guaves, about 1659. The first French Governor was sent out from Paris in 1665.

No more of Wafer's life has come to light. The *Dictionary of National Biography* remarks that he 'settled in London and is said to have died there about 1705'. No authority is given for the statement.

Wafer's book was incorporated into a Dutch translation of Dampier's *Voyages* by A. de Hond, in 1700. Two French translations were made, one in 1706 by De Montirat; the second was published in Amsterdam in 1714. It also appears in a German translation of Dampier's *Voyages* issued in Frankfort and Leipzig in 1707; the great part of the text was reprinted in the third volume of Dampier's *Voyages* in 1729; Vicente Restrepo published a Spanish text in Bogotá (Colombia) in 1888; in 1903 it was printed in Cleveland, Ohio, with a brief introduction by G. P. Winship.

The text of the present volume follows that of the first edition of Wafer's *New Voyage*, carefully compared with the second edition. A few *errata*, occurring in the first edition and corrected in the second, appear as in the issue of 1704; and one or two mis-spellings, as 'preceived' for 'perceived' and 'mon-grove' for 'mangrove' (obviously typographical, since the same words are spelt elsewhere in accord with common usage), which appear in both editions, have also been corrected. Punctuation has been, occasionally, changed to conform with modern ideas. With these few exceptions, the present text is a reproduction of Wafer's story as it first appeared in 1699.

## WAFER'S PREFACES

*To the 1st Edition (1699)*

THO' this Book bears partly the Name of VOYAGES, yet I shall here acquaint you before-hand, as I have hinted in the Book it self, That you are not to expect any Thing like a Compleat Journal, or Historical Account of all Occurrences in the Scene of my Travels. My principal Design was to give what Description I could of the ISTHMUS of DARIEN, where I was left among the wild Indians: and as for the preceding and subsequent Relations, I have, in them, only briefly represented the Course of my Voyages; without particularizing, any further, than to speak of a few Things I thought more especially remarkable. I cannot pretend to so great an Exactness, but that I may have fail'd in some Circumstances, especially in the Descriptive Part; which I leave to be made up by the longer Experience, and more accurate Observations of Others. But I have been as careful as I could: and tho' there are some Matters of Fact that will seem strange, yet I have been more especially careful in these, to say nothing but what, according to the best of my Knowledge, is the very Truth. I was but Young when I was abroad, and I kept no Journal; so that I may be dispenc'd with as to Defects and Failings of less moment. Yet I have not trusted altogether to my own Memory; but some Things I committed to Writing, long before I return'd to England; and have since been frequently comparing and rectifying my Notices, by Discoursing such of my Fellow-Travellers as I have met with in London. And 'tis even my Desire that the Reader, as he has Opportunity, would consult any of them, as to these particulars; being not fond of having him take them upon my single Word. He will do both himself and me a Kindness in it, if he will be so Candid, withal, as to make me such Allowance as the Premises call for. He will ease me of the Odium of Singularity; and himself of Doubt, or a Knowledge, it may be, too defective.

*To the 2nd Edition (1704)*

THE Design of this Second Publication of my Description of the Isthmus of Darien, improved with a Late Expedition to the Gold-Mines, since the beginning of the present War;<sup>1</sup> and also with the Natural History of those Parts; giving an Account of several Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, &c., and particularly many Trees, Shrubs, and Herbs, with their respective Names, Uses, and Virtues; Communicated by a Fellow of the Royal Society;<sup>2</sup> being only to represent to the World how far it would be the Interest of England to make an Establishment upon that Continent; the Product of whose Bowels enriches the other Three Parts of the World. Because I am unwilling to weary the Reader with a tedious Discourse upon this Subject, I shall only tell him, in few Words, that if I plainly demonstrate the thing might be very easily effected, and that the Advantages that would thereby accrue to the Nation would more than answer their Charges, I think there will remain but little to be said against so Glorious an Undertaking.

That such a thing might be successfully performed by the English in this present Conjuncture; and that they would easily be able to maintain themselves in the Possession of that valuable Conquest, notwithstanding the greatest Efforts that the French could be able to make against them, can scarce be well denied by any Man that will be at the pains to consider, that we being vastly Superiour to them by Sea, whatever number of Land-forces they might be in a condition to spare from Europe, 'tis our own Fault if even they transport them thither. And as to the number of Men that such an Expedition would require of us, considering the favourable Disposition of the Indians (who are entirely our Friends) and the Weakness and Divisions of our enemies, the Spaniards, I believe it would not be so considerable as some People are apt to apprehend.

For the American Spaniards, accustomed only to Domineer and Tyrannize their miserable Slaves, have now languished such a considerable time in Sloth and Idleness, that it would require some Years to innure them to the Hardships and

<sup>1</sup> The War of the Spanish Succession.

<sup>2</sup> Then presided over by Sir Isaac Newton: Secretary, Sir Hans Sloane.

Fatigues of War; and under their present Circumstances, who knows but we might find them less averse to give the English a kind reception than we are now aware of?

The Vicinity of the English Colonies to the Spanish in America would render it an easie matter to them to support one another upon all Occasions; though the Benefits that the Kingdom would thereby reap be in themselves apparent, beyond all possibility of contradiction. To conclude: I shall only desire all Men of Sense and Judgement to consider how much the Interest of England would be advanced in Europe by the Addition of the Spanish West-Indies, to their other Acquisitions in America; since thereby the Common Enemies would be deprived of the most certain Fund they have for carrying on the War. In a Word; the Difficulty and Expence are not at all, by any reasonable Man, to be brought in Competition with the Glory and Advantage of such an Expedition.

As to the book itself, though it partly bears the Name of Voyages, you are not to expect a Compleat Journal, or Historic Account of all Occurrences in the Scene of my Travels, but principally as particular a Description as I could give of the Isthmus of Darien, where I was left amongst the wild Indians. For in the precedent and subsequent Relations I have only briefly represented the Course of my Voyages, that the Reader might not be deprived of the Pleasure of knowing by what Adventure I happen'd to fall into that country, and how I found Means to make my Escape out of it.

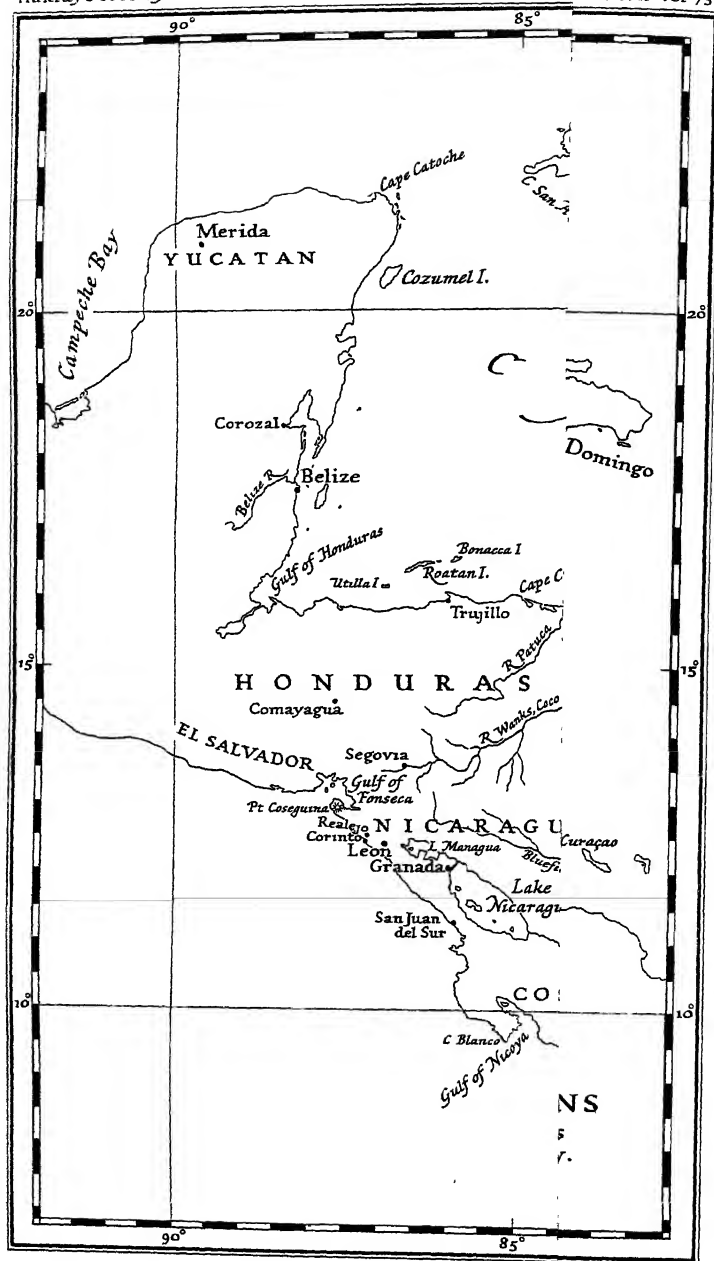
There now remains but one thing to be said; and that is, to tell you, that I think it very convenient to take this Opportunity of vindicating my self to the World, concerning some Circumstances in the Relation I have given of the Indian way of Conjuring (called by them Pawawing) and of the White Indians; at which several of the most eminent Men of the Nation seem'd very much startled. But I hope that the Testimony of all the Scotch Gentlemen and others, who have been there since me, will be look'd upon by all good Men, as a sufficient Authority to confirm the Truth of what I have asserted concerning those Matters; since none of them, neither by their Writings, nor otherway, have contradicted me; but, on the contrary, confirmed what I have said in every Article,

which has been no small Satisfaction to me. And Mr. Davis likewise (who is the Author of the foresaid Relation of the Late Expedition to the Gold Mines) desired me, in a late Conference I had with him, to acquaint the World, that if the said Relation had not been printed off before I talked with him about it, he would himself have given a large Account of it; declaring, That the Pawawing of the Indians that follow'd Don Pedro in that Expedition, was the principal Reason that induc'd some of the English, who were more Superstitious than others, to leave the Mines much sooner than they at first intended to have done; because the Uneasiness in which the Indians then seemed to be made them likewise apprehensive of some extraordinary Danger from the Spaniards.









## Mr. Wafer's Voyages; and Description of the Isthmus of America.

MY first going abroad was in the *Great Ann* of London, Capt. *Zachary Browne* Commander, bound for *Bantam* in the Isle of *Java*, in the *East-Indies*, in the Year 1677. I was in the Service of the Surgeon of the Ship; but being then very young, I made no great Observations in that Voyage. My Stay at *Bantam* was not above a Month, we being sent from thence to *Jamby*<sup>1</sup> in the Isle of *Sumatra*. At that time there was a War between the *Malayans* of *Iihor* on the Promontory of *Malacca*, and those of *Jamby*; and a Fleet of Proe's from *Iihore*<sup>2</sup> block'd up the Mouth of the River of *Jamby*. The Town of *Jamby* is about 100 Mile up the River. But within 4 or 5 Mile of the Sea, it hath a Port Town on the River, consisting of about 15 or 20 Houses, built on Posts, as the Fashion of that Country is. The Name of this Port is *Quolla*; though this seems rather an Appellative than a proper Name, for they generally call a Port *Quolla*.<sup>3</sup> And 'tis usual with our English Seamen in those Parts, when they have been at a Landing-place, to say they have been at the *Quolla*, calling it so in imitation of the Natives; as the *Portuguese* call their Landing-places, *Barcadero's*.<sup>4</sup> This War was some hindrance to our Trade there; and we were forc'd to stay about 4 Months in the Road, before we could get in our Lading of Pepper. And thence we return'd to *Bantam*, to take in the rest of our Lading. While I was ashore there, the Ship sail'd for *England*. So I got a Passage home in another Ship, The *Bombay*, Capt. *White* Commander; who being Chief Mate, succeeded Capt. *Bennet*, who dy'd in the Voyage.

I arrived in *England* again in the Year 1679, and after about a Months stay, I entred my self on a Second Voyage, in a Vessel commanded by Capt. *Buckenham*, bound for the *West-Indies*. I was there also in the Service of the Surgeon of the

<sup>1</sup> Jambi, on the eastern side of Sumatra, S.Lat. 1° 30".

<sup>2</sup> Proas (native sailing craft) from Johore.

<sup>3</sup> Quolla = Kuala; a Malay word, meaning the mouth of a river, whether that river flows into another river or into the sea.

<sup>4</sup> Embarcadouros, i.e. places of embarkation.

Ship: but when we came to *Jamaica*, the Season of Sugars being not yet come, the Captain was willing to make a short Voyage, in the mean while, to the Bay of *Campeachy*, to fetch Logwood.<sup>1</sup> But having no mind to go further with him, I staid in *Jamaica*. It proved well for me that I did so; for in that Expedition the Captain was taken by the *Spaniards*, and carried Prisoner to *Mexico*, where one *Russel* saw him, who was then also a Prisoner there, and after made his Escape. He told me he saw Capt. *Buckenham*, with a Log chain'd to his Leg, and a Basket at his Back, crying Bread about the Streets for a Baker his Master. The *Spaniards* would never consent to the Ransoming him, tho' he was a Gentleman who had Friends of a considerable Fortune, and would have given them a very large Sum of Mony.

I had a Brother in *Jamaica*, who was imployed under Sir *Thomas Muddiford*,<sup>2</sup> in his Plantation at the *Angels*, and my chief Inducement in undertaking this Voyage was to see him. I staid some time with him, and he settled me in a House at *Port-Royal*, where I followed my Business of Surgery for some

<sup>1</sup> Logwood brought prices varying from £20 to £110 per ton in English markets, after relaxation of the Elizabethan laws against the use of 'a false dying wood called logwood, blockwood or Campesea [*Campeche*] wood'. But since the regions of Yucatan and Honduras, chief habitats of the tree, were, as part of the Main, in Spanish hands, non-Spanish cutters of the wood were raiders, and when caught, not infrequently suffered harsh treatment. Sometimes the British authorities were able to effect the release of their nationals: and later, the terms of treaties, from time to time, were regarded as permits; but it was not until the settlement of the little coastal strip, now British Honduras, below Yucatan, that the British could securely cut logwood, fustic, and mahogany on the Main.

<sup>2</sup> Modyford: Governor of *Jamaica* from 1664 to 1671, when Sir Thomas Lynch succeeded him. Previously, Modyford had governed Barbados, 1660-4. He was reputed to look kindly upon the actions of buccaneers, and accused of receiving one-fifteenth of the value of all loot brought into Port Royal while Governor of *Jamaica*. He was certainly a friend of Sir Henry Morgan. Modyford was a far-seeing tropical agriculturist, introduced sugar-culture into *Jamaica*, and maintained fine plantations, partly experimental, near Port Royal; that of Los Angeles was famous. Sent home to answer charges based on Spanish complaints regarding his kindness to pirates, Modyford was imprisoned in the Tower for some time, but ultimately, in 1675, was allowed to return to his *Jamaican* estates. He died there in the year of Wafer's visit, 1679.

Months. But in a while I met with Capt. *Cook*,<sup>1</sup> and Capt. *Linch*, two Privateers, who were going out from *Port-Royal*, toward the Coast of *Cartagena*, and took me along with them. We met other Privateers on that Coast; but being parted from them by stress of Weather about *Golden-Island*, in the *Samballoe's*, we stood away to the *Bastimento's*,<sup>2</sup> where we met them again, and several others, who had been at the taking of *Portobel*, and were Rendesvouzed there.<sup>3</sup> Here I first met with Mr. *Dampier*, and was with him in the Expedition into the *S. Seas*. For in short, having muster'd up our Forces at *Golden-Island*, and landed on the *Isthmus*, we march'd over Land,<sup>4</sup> and took *Santa Maria*;<sup>5</sup> and made those Excursions into the *S. Seas*, which Mr. *Ringrose* relates in the 4th part of the *History* of the *Buccaniers*.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. *Dampier* has told, in his *Introduction* to his *Voyage round the World*,<sup>7</sup> in what manner the Company divided with reference

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Cook.

<sup>2</sup> Small islands off the (then abandoned) Spanish town of Nombre de Dios: favourite rendezvous of international buccaneers.

<sup>3</sup> The raiders of Portobello dared not return to Jamaica, where the exasperated Governor had issued orders for their arrest, and explicit prohibitions against intercourse with Sharp, Coxon, and their companions. An overland expedition towards the Pacific offered a safer alternative.

<sup>4</sup> 331 men, not counting native helpers, actually made the crossing, starting on Monday, 5th April, 1680. For details, see *Introduction*.

<sup>5</sup> *La Real* [military camp] de Santa Maria was at first no more than a wooden fort, defended by Spanish troops from Panama; built in 1665 at the mouth of the Pirre river to receive and guard the gold collected from a number of rivers flowing into the Gulf of San Miguel. The richest region of all Tierra Firme was first worked about 1679, known as Santa Cruz de Cana, on the Tuira river. The most famous deposit was that of *Espirito Santo*.

<sup>6</sup> Ringrose's account was printed at the end of the English translation of the *History of the Buccaneers of America*, by one Exquemeling or Oexmelin, a Flemish, French or Dutch pirate who had sailed with Morgan. The book is coloured in more than one chapter by antipathy to the English, and Sir Henry Morgan, considering himself slandered, brought an action for libel against Malthus the publisher, received £200 damages, and a public apology. A manuscript written by Ringrose, differing slightly from the published versions of his story of the Darien raid, with beautiful decorations and maps by Captain William Hack, is preserved in the British Museum (Sloane MS. 48).

<sup>7</sup> Published in London, in early 1697.

to Capt. *Sharp*.<sup>1</sup> I was of Mr. *Dampier*'s side in that Matter, and of the number of those who chose rather to return in Boats to the *Isthmus*, and go back again a toilsom Journey over Land, than stay under a Captain in whom we experienc'd neither Courage nor Conduct.<sup>2</sup> He hath given also an Account of what befel us in that Return, till such time as by the Carlesness of our Company, my Knee was so scorch'd with Gunpowder, that after a few Days further March, I was left behind among the *Wild-Indians*, in the *Isthmus* of *Darien*.<sup>3</sup>

It was the 5th Day of our Journey when this Accident befel me; being also the 5th of *May*, in the Year 1681. I was sitting on the Ground near one of our Men, who was drying of Gunpowder in a Silver Plate, but not managing it as he should, it blew up, and scorch'd my Knee to that degree, that the Bone was left bare, the Flesh being torn away, and my Thigh burnt for a great way above it. I applied to it immediately such Remedies as I had in my Knapsack, and being unwilling to be left behind my Companions, I made hard shift to jog on, and bear them Company for a few Days; during which our Slaves ran away from us, and among them a Negro whom the Company had allow'd me for my particular Attendant, to carry my Medicines. He took them away with him, together with the rest of my Things, and thereby left me depriv'd of wherewithal

<sup>1</sup> This party, electing to return by land rather than stay with Sharp, formed the third defection from the original expedition. 'We were in number 44 white Men who bore Arms, a Spanish Indian, who bore Arms also; and two Moskito Indians [from Nicaragua], who always bear Arms among the Privateers, and are much valued by them for striking Fish, and Turtle or Tortoise, and Manatee or Sea Cow; and 5 slaves taken in the South Seas, who fell to our share', says Dampier.

<sup>2</sup> The seasoned buccaneer Captain Bartholomew Sharp became Commander-in-Chief of the expedition after the death of Sawkins (May, 1680) but was deposed when at Juan Fernandez Islands, on 6 January, 1681. Watling was then elected, but was killed soon afterwards, and the buccaneers disagreed when Sharp's friends made a successful effort to reinstate him. Sharp returned eventually to England, was tried but acquitted, and had an interesting later career.

<sup>3</sup> Of the surgeons who originally accompanied the expedition, the most experienced had already returned with Coxon and 50 followers across the Isthmus in April, 1680; and all the others except Wafer were taken prisoner by the Spaniards at a mismanaged attack on Arica.

to dress my Sore; insomuch that my Pain increasing upon me, and being not able to trudge it further through Rivers and Woods, I took leave of my Company, and set up my Rest among the *Darien* Indians.

This was on the 10th Day; and there staid with me Mr. *Richard Gopson*, who had served an Apprenticeship to a Druggist in *London*. He was an ingenious Man, and a good Scholar; and had with him a *Greek* Testament which he frequently read, and would translate *extempore* into English to such of the Company as were dispos'd to hear him. Another who staid behind with me was *John Hingson*, Mariner.<sup>1</sup> They were both so fatigued with the Journey that they could go no further. There had been an Order made among us at our first Landing, to kill any who should flag in the Journey. But this was made only to terrify any from loitering, and being taken by the *Spaniards*; who by Tortures might extort from them a Discovery of our March. But this rigorous Order was not executed; but the Company took a very kind Leave both of these, and of me. Before this we had lost the Company of two more of our Men, *Robert Spratlin* and *William Bowman*, who parted with us at the River *Congo*, the Day after my being scorch'd with Gunpowder. The Passage of that River was very deep, and the Stream violent; by which means I was born down the Current, for several Paces, to an Eddy in the bending of the River. Yet I got over; but these two being the hindmost, and seeing with what difficulty I cross'd the River, which was still rising, they were discourag'd from attempting it, and chose rather to stay where they were. These two came to me; and the other two soon after the Company's departure for the North-Sea, as I shall have occasion to mention; so that there were five of us in all who were left behind among the *Indians*.

Being now forc'd to stay among them, and having no means to alleviate the Anguish of my Wound, the *Indians* undertook

<sup>1</sup> Wafer and Hingson (or Hincen) remained together for at least the next nine years. They were with Edward Davis in Virginia; during subsequent years of raiding in the 'South Seas'; and with him returned to the Atlantic, were captured, and imprisoned in Jamestown for some two years. The three were at last set free, returned to England in 1690, and made in common their eventually successful claim for restitution of the silver and other loot acquired during buccaneering times.

to cure me;<sup>1</sup> and apply'd to my Knee some Herbs, which they first chew'd in their Mouths to the consistency of a Paste, and putting it on a Plantain-Leaf, laid it upon the Sore. This prov'd so effectual that in about 20 Days use of this Poultess, which they applied fresh every Day, I was perfectly cured; except only a Weakness in that Knee, which remain'd long after, and a Benumbedness which I sometimes find in it to this Day. Yet they were not altogether so kind in other respects; for some of them look'd on us very scurvily, throwing green Plantains to us, as we sat cringing and shivering, as you would Bones to a Dog. This was but sorry Food; yet we were forc'd to be contented with it. But to mend our Commons, the young *Indian*, at whose House we were left, would often give us some ripe Plantains, unknown to his Neighbours; and these were a great Refreshment to us. This *Indian*, in his Childhood, was taken a Prisoner by the *Spaniards*; and having liv'd some time among them, he had learn'd a pretty deal of their Language, under the Bishop of *Panama*,<sup>2</sup> whom he serv'd there; till finding means to escape, he was got again among his own Countrymen. This was of good use to us; for we having a smattering of *Spanish*, and a little of the *Indian's* Tongue also, by passing their Country before, between both these, and with the additional use of Signs, we found it no very difficult Matter to

<sup>1</sup> Dampier says in his MS. Journal (Sloane 3236): 'You have already heard that the reason which obliged the Chirurgeon to stay behind was by a sad disaster having his knee blown up with powder and for want of rest it grew worse and his medicines being but few and almost spoiled he was beholding to the Indians whose skill proved effectual towards the healing of it by certain herbs which they chewed in their mouths which in less than 20 days by God's blessing effected the cure.'

<sup>2</sup> The famous Bishop Piedrahita (Dr. Lucas Fernandez y Piedrahita), a 'creole' born in Bogotá, New Granada (the present Republic of Colombia), pursued a policy of conciliation towards native tribes; in his later life, Acosta says, he spent 8,000 pesos in gifts to the Indians. Made Bishop of Santa Marta in 1669, he was appointed to the see of Panama in 1676; but when about to leave Santa Marta, in June, 1677, the town was raided by English pirates under John Coxon, and the Bishop was put aboard a vessel (with a view to ransom) and taken to Jamaica. Here Governor Vaughan received him hospitably, and Morgan gave him a pontifical robe seized in the raid upon Panama in 1671. He was sent back to the mainland with courtesies. Bishop Piedrahita completed in Panama, about 1688, a valuable *Historia General de la Conquista del Nuevo Mundo y Reino de Granada*.

understand one another. He was truly generous and hospitable toward us; and so careful of us, that if in the Day-time we had no other Provision than a few sorry green Plantains, he would rise in the Night, and go out by stealth to the Neighbouring Plantain-walk, and fetch a Bundle of ripe ones from thence, which he would distribute among us unknown to his Countrymen. Not that they were naturally inclin'd to use us thus roughly, for they are generally a kind and free-hearted People; but they had taken some particular Offence, upon the account of our Friends who left us, who had in a manner awed the *Indian* Guides they took with them for the remainder of their Journey, and made them go with them very much against their Wills; the Severity of the Rainy Season being then so great that even the *Indians* themselves had no mind for Travelling, tho' they are little curious either as to the Weather or Ways.<sup>1</sup>

When *Gopson*, *Hingson*, and I had lived 3 or 4 Days in this manner, the other two, *Spratlin* and *Bowman*, whom we left behind at the River *Congo*, on the 6th Day of our Journey, found their way to us; being exceedingly fatigued with rambling so long among the wild Woods and Rivers without Guides, and having no other Sustenance but a few Plantains<sup>2</sup> they found here and there. They told us of *George Gainy's* Disaster, whose Drowning Mr. *Dampier* relates p. 17. They saw him lie dead on the Shore which the Floods were gone off from, with the Rope twisted about him, and his Mony at his Neck; but they were so fatigued, they car'd not to meddle with it.<sup>3</sup> These,

<sup>1</sup> The rainy season in Panama lasts from April to October, and is often marked by terrific storms and floods, when no creature goes abroad if he can help it. The buccaneers had been grudgingly passed from guide to guide, and on 9 May, 1681, were taken by a friendly Indian to his house in the village where, next day, Wafer and two others stayed behind. Two young Indians who spoke a little Spanish were induced to take Dampier's party on, by gifts and promises, and, says Dampier, 'seeing they could not persuade us to stay, came with us', although they had 'opposed it as much as they could'.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Plantaine . . . serves them for bread and is all the bread they have, and though they have Indian Corn yett they never make bread with it.' (Wafer's MS. quoted by Dampier, Sloane MS. 3236.)

<sup>3</sup> Gainy, or Gayny, who was with the main party, was chosen to take a line across a swollen river. Dampier relates that the sailor 'took the end of a line and made it fast about his neck, and left the other end ashore, and



after their coming up to us, continued with us for about a Fortnight longer, at the same Plantation where the main Body of our Company had left us; and our Provision was still at the same Rate, and the Countenances of the *Indians* as stern towards us as ever, having yet no News of their Friends whom our Men had taken as their Guides. Yet notwithstanding their Disgust, they still took care of my Wound; which by this time was pretty well healed, and I was enabled to walk about. But at length not finding their Men return as they expected, they were out of Patience, and seem'd resolved to revenge on us the Injuries which they suppos'd our Friends had done to theirs. To this end they held frequent Consultations how they should dispose of us. Some were for killing us, others for keeping us among them, and others for carrying us to the *Spaniards*, thereby to ingratiate themselves with them. But the greatest part of them mortally hating the *Spaniards*, this last Project was soon laid aside; and they came to this Resolution, To forbear doing any thing to us, till so much Time were expir'd as they thought might reasonably be allow'd for the return of their Friends, whom our Men had taken with them as Guides to the North Sea-Coast; and this, as they computed, would be 10 Days, reckoning it up to us on their Fingers.

The Time was now almost expir'd, and having no News of the Guides, the *Indians* began to suspect that our Men had either murder'd them, or carried them away with them; and seem'd resolv'd thereupon to destroy us. To this end they prepared a great Pile of Wood to burn us, on the 10th Day; and told us what we must trust to when the Sun went down; for they would not execute us till then.<sup>1</sup>

one man stood by the line, to clear it away to him'. The rope tangled, and the man on the bank threw it into the river to give Gainy freedom; but he was weightd with a bag of 300 'pieces of eight' (silver dollars) about his neck, and was swept away and drowned.

<sup>1</sup> Wafer's original MS., as quoted by Dampier in Sloane MS. 3236, contains interesting variants of the story as published. Here the author said, regarding the *Indians*' plan to burn the Englishmen, 'for they execute none in the face of the sunne'. The *Cuna* (as apart from their kin the mountain *Bravos*, who have long used guns), to this day dislike shedding blood, and death in modern times is usually inflicted by slow fire or rather suffocation, clouds of smoke being produced by burning aromatic herbs and green

But it so hapned that *Lacenta*, their Chief, passing that way, dissuaded them from that Cruelty, and proposed to them to send us down towards the North-side, and two *Indians* with us, who might inform themselves from the *Indians* near the Coast, what was become of the Guides. They readily hearken'd to this Proposal, and immediately chose two Men to conduct us to the North-side.<sup>1</sup> One of these had been all along an inveterate Enemy to us; but the other was that kind *Indian*, who was so much our Friend, as to rise in the Night and get us ripe Plantains.

The next Day therefore we were dismissed with our two Guides, and marched Joyfully for 3 Days; being well assur'd we should not find that our Men had done any hurt to their Guides. The first three Days we march'd thro' nothing but Swamps, having great Rains, with much Thunder and Lightning; and lodg'd every Night under the dropping Trees, upon the cold Ground. The third Night we lodg'd on a small Hill, which by the next Morning was become an Island, for those great Rains had made such a Flood, that all the low Land about it was cover'd deep with Water. All this while we had no Provision, except a handful of dry Maiz our *Indian* Guides gave us the first two Days. But this being spent, they return'd home again, and left us to shift for our selves.

At this Hill we remained the fourth Day; and on the fifth the Waters being abated, we set forward, steering North by a Pocket Compass, and marched till 6 a Clock at Night, at which time we arrived at a River about 40 foot wide, and very deep. Here we found a Tree fallen cross the River,<sup>2</sup> and so we believed

wood. Gassó relates that Portete, a magician of Narganá, was killed in this way in the early part of the present century.

<sup>1</sup> The route chosen by the Cuna for this return journey was not that by which the expedition had crossed from Caribbean to Pacific in April of the previous year; Wafer's guides took him to the coast some 50 miles west of Golden Island, to a point where Dampier's party had also been taken some months before.

<sup>2</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'and saw on the other side some old Raggs hanging on a tree.' Dampier's party had crossed here, after felling a tree for a bridge, on 9 May. This river was probably a tributary of the Chepo (or Bayano), running from the south.

our Men had past that way; therefore here we sat down, and consulted what course we should take.

And having debated the Matter, it was concluded upon to cross the River, and seek the Path in which they had travelled. For this River running somewhat Northward in this place, we perswaded our selves we were past the main Ridge of Land that divided the North part of the *Isthmus* from the South; and consequently that we were not very far from the North Sea. Besides, we did not consider that the great Rains were the only cause of the sudden rising and falling of the River; but thought the Tide might contribute to it, and that we were not very far from the Sea. We went therefore over the River by the help of the Tree. But the Rain had made it so slippery, that 'twas with great difficulty that we could get over it astride, for there was no walking on it, and tho' four of us got pretty well over, yet *Bowman*, who was the last, slipt off, and the Stream hurried him out of sight in a moment, so that we concluded he was Drown'd. To add to our Affliction for the loss of our Consort, we sought about for a Path, but found none; for the late Flood had fill'd all the Land with Mud and Oaze, and therefore since we could not find a Path, we returned again, and passed over the River on the same Tree by which we cross'd it at first; intending to pass down by the side of this River, which we still thought discharged it self into the North Sea. But when we were over, and had gone down with the Stream a quarter of a Mile, we espy'd our Companion sitting on the Bank of the River; who, when we came to him, told us, that the violence of the Stream hurry'd him thither, and that there being in an Eddy, he had time to consider where he was; and that by the help of some Boughs<sup>1</sup> that hung in the Water, he had got out. This Man had at this time 400 pieces of Eight at his Back. He was a weakly Man, a Taylor by Trade.

Here we lay all Night; and the next Day, being the 5th of our present Journey, we march'd further down by the side of the River, thro' thickets of hollow Bamboes and Brambles, being also very weak for want of Food. But Providence suffer'd us not to Perish, tho' Hunger and Weariness had brought us even

<sup>1</sup> Wafer had originally written 'mangroves'; but perhaps discovered later that *mangle* would not be likely to grow so far inland. (Sloane MS. 3236.)

to Death's door. For we found there a *Maccaw* Tree,<sup>1</sup> which afforded us Berries, of which we eat greedily; and having therewith somewhat satisfied our Hunger, we carried a Bundle of them away with us, and continued our March till Night.

The next Day being the 6th, we marched till 4 in the Afternoon, when we arrived at another River, which join'd with that we had hitherto coasted; and we were now inclos'd between them, on a little Hill at the Conflux of them. This last River was as wide and deep as the former; so that here we were put to a *Non-plus*, not being able to find means to Ford either of them, and they being here too wide for a Tree to go across, unless a greater Tree than we were able to cut down; having no Tool with us but a Macheat<sup>2</sup> or long Knife. This last River also we set by the Compass, and found it run due North.<sup>3</sup> Which confirmed us in our Mistake, that we were on the North side of the main Ridge of Mountains; and therefore we resolv'd upon making two Bark-logs,<sup>4</sup> to float us down the River, which we unanimously concluded would bring us to the North Sea Coast. The Woods afforded us hollow Bamboes fit for our purpose; and we cut them into proper lengths, and tied them together with Twigs of a Shrub like a Vine, a great many on the top of one another.

By that time we had finished our Bark-logs it was Night, and we took up our Lodging on a small Hill, where we gathered

<sup>1</sup> The word Macaw is a corruption of a native South American name, 'Maccaüba' in South Brazil and 'Mocajá' in North Brazil, says Von Martius; Barrère in 1741 speaks of a 'Mocaya' palm; Aublet, 1775, gives 'Mocaiá' as the Carib name. Guaraní Indians of Pará, according to Barbosa Rodrigues, call it 'mbokaya-iba', or 'tree with fruit that explode loudly when opening'. Botanically, the Macaw is known as *Acrocomia sclerocarpa*; the buccaneers probably first made its acquaintance in the West Indies, where its sweet oily yellow fruits are commonly eaten.

<sup>2</sup> Sp. 'machete', something like a cutlass; an invaluable tool and weapon, of universal use in Central America.

<sup>3</sup> This description, together with previous statements, seems to confirm the suggestion that Wafer had now reached an important affluent of the Chepo: tributaries join it from both north and south, tipped by the tumbled masses of hills, and Wafer's party was travelling along a small valley inclined to the northward.

<sup>4</sup> Sp. 'barcolongo' or 'barcoluengo': flat boat, used here for 'raft'.

about a Cart-load of Wood, and made a Fire, intending to set out with our Bark-logs the next Morning. But not long after Sun-set, it fell a Raining as if Heaven and Earth would meet; which Storm was accompanied with horrid Claps of Thunder, and such flashes of Lightning, of a Sulpherous smell, that we were almost stifled in the open Air.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it continued till 12 a Clock at Night; when to our great Terror, we could hear the Rivers roaring on both sides us; but 'twas so dark, that we could see nothing but the Fire we had made, except when a flash of Lightning came. Then we could see all over the Hill, and perceive the Water approaching us; which in less than half an hour carried away our Fire. This drove us all to our shifts, every Man seeking some means to save himself from the threatening Deluge. We also sought for small Trees to climb, for the place abounded with great Cotton Trees, of a prodigious bigness from the Root upwards, and at least 40 or 50 foot clear without Branches, so that there was no climbing up them.

For my own part, I was in a great Consternation, and running to save my Life, I very opportunely met with a large Cotton Tree, which by some accident, or thro' Age, was become rotten, and hollow on one side;<sup>2</sup> having a hole in it at about the height of 4 foot from the ground. I immediately got up into it as well as I could, and in the Cavity I found a knob, which served me for a Stool; and there I sat down almost Head and Heels together, not having room enough to stand or sit upright. In this Condition I sat wishing for Day, but being fatigued with Travel, though very hungry withal, and cold, I fell asleep, but was soon awakned by the noise of great Trees which were brought down by the Flood; and came with such force against the Tree, that they made it shake.<sup>3</sup>

When I awoke, I found my Knees in the Water, though the

<sup>1</sup> The height of the rainy season, generally attained in late June, was approaching. As a certain compensation, the temperature of the wet months, April-December, drops to points between 75° and 87°, from a much higher average in the three or four months of dry weather.

<sup>2</sup> The Wafer original quoted in Sloane MS. 3236 says: 'I mett with a hallow Tree which I immediately made my Ark.'

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 'and came with such force against my pallace that it made the whole fabrike shake.'





lowest part of my hollow Trunk was, as I said, 4 foot above the ground; and the Water was running as swift, as if 'twere in the middle of the River. The Night was still very dark, but only when the flashes of Lightning came, which made it so dreadful and terrible, that I forgot my Hunger, and was wholly taken up with praying to God to spare my Life. While I was Praying and Meditating thus on my sad Condition, I saw the Morning Star appear, by which I knew that Day was at hand. This cheered my drooping Spirits, and in less than half an hour the Day began to dawn, the Rain and Lightning ceas'd, and the Waters abated, insomuch that by that time the Sun was up, the Water was gone off from my Tree.

Then I ventured out of my cold Lodging; but being stiff and the Ground slippery, I could scarce stand. Yet I made a shift to ramble to the Place where we had made our Fire, but found no Body there. Then I call'd out aloud, but was answer'd only with my own Eccho; which struck such Terror into me, that I fell down as dead, being oppress'd both with Grief and Hunger; this being the 7th Day of our Fast, save only the *Maccaw*-berries before related.

Being in this Condition, despairing of Comfort for want of my Consorts, I lay some time on the wet Ground, till at last I heard a Voice hard by me, which in some sort revived me; but especially when I saw it was Mr. *Hingson*, one of my Companions,<sup>1</sup> and the rest found us presently after, having all sav'd themselves by climbing small Trees. We greeted each other with Tears in our Eyes, and returned Thanks to God for our Deliverance.

The first thing we did in the Morning was to look after our Bark-logs or Rafts, which we had left tied to a Tree, in order to prosecute our Voyage down the River; but coming to the Place where we left them, we found them sunk and full of Water, which had got into the hollow of the Bamboes, contrary to our Expectation; for we thought they would not have admitted so much as Air, but have been like large Bladders full blown. But it seems there were Cracks in them which we did not perceive, and perhaps made in them by our Carelessness in

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 3236: 'When I saw it was my companion you can not imagine the alteration I found.'



working them; for the Vessels made of these Hollow *Bamboe's* are wont to hold Water very well.

This was a new Vexation to us, and how to proceed farther we knew not; but Providence still directed all for the better. For if we had gone down this River, which we afterwards understood to be a River that runs into the River of *Chepo*,<sup>1</sup> and so towards the Bay of *Panama* and the South Sea, it would have carried us into the midst of our Enemies the *Spaniards*, from whom we could expect no Mercy.

The Neighbourhood of the Mountains, and steepness of the Descent, is the cause that the Rivers rise thus suddenly after these violent Rains; but for the same reason they as suddenly fall again.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Chepo is one of the few Isthmian rivers retaining its seventeenth-century name, although it was and is also known as the Bayano (Ballona, Vallano, or Vallona, on old maps). Like the Chucunaque, the Chepo draws its main waters from mountains crowding, between Punta San Blas and Cape Tiburón, close to the Caribbean shore; the head waters of the two rivers are separated only by a ridge. But while the Chucunaque, great highway of the native tribes, makes a devious way, generally south-east, into the Bay of San Miguel, the Chepo runs west and south into Panama Bay, within 30 miles of Panama City. Almost due north of the Chepo's outflow lies the curve of the Gulf of San Blas, contracting the neck of the Isthmus to about 28 miles. Engineers seeking a canal route 100 years ago suggested this belt, or another narrow path between the tide-ending on the Savana river and Mosquito Point: in each case, the tangle of mountain, forest, and swamp created formidable difficulties.

Fifteen miles up the Chepo lies one of the towns (the other is Yavisa, 120 miles south-east) where the Cimaroons were allowed to settle after their reduction by Spanish troops, following the co-operation of these free negroes with Drake in the sixteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> Wafer, quoted by Dampier, Sloane MS. 3236, adds: 'and from these mountains the gold is washed down into the Rivers by the great raines which I shall more fully declare, and if wee had at this time been 1000 men we might have loaden ourselves with Gold within 5 mile of this place but indeed wee then knew not of soe much treasure soe neare us. This branch of the River which we here mett with is the only place where the Spaniards gett their gold. And I leave any impartiall person to judge of the riches that lay in these mountains when 6 negroes will wash as much as will fille 12 pinte pots full in three months time, and at the same time 50 of them had been at worke who gott as much gold in that season as loaded a small slooppe to Panama.'

Wafer probably discovered later the inaccuracy of the statement that the river encountered was the Spaniards' unique source of gold, and therefore

But to return to my Story, being thus frustrate of our Design of going down the Stream, or of crossing either of these Rivers, by reason of the sinking of our Bark-logs, we were glad to think of returning back to the *Indian* Settlement, and Coasted up the River side in the same Track we came down by. As our Hunger was ready to carry our Eyes to any Object that might afford us some Relief, it hapned that we espied a Deer fast asleep, which we designed if possible to get, and in order to it we came so very near, that we might almost have thrown our selves on him. But one of our Men putting the Muzzle of his Gun close to him, and the Shot not being wadded, tumbled out, just before the Gun went off, and did the Deer no hurt; but starting up at the noise, he took the River and swam over. As long as our way lay by the River side, we made a shift to keep it well enough, but being now to take leave of the River, in order to seek for the *Indians* Habitation, we were much at a loss. This was the Eighth Day, and we had no Sustenance beside the *Maccaw*-Berries we had got, and the Pith of a *Bibby*-Tree<sup>1</sup> we met with, which we split and eat very savourly.

After a little Consideration what course to steer next, we concluded it best to follow the Track of a *Pecary* or Wild-Hog, hoping it might bring us to some old Plantain Walk or Potato Piece, which these Creatures often resort to, to look for Food. This brought us, according to our Expectation, to an old Plantation, and in sight of a new one. But here again Fear overwhelmed us, being between two straits, either to starve or venture up to the Houses of the *Indians*, whom being so near, we were now afraid of again, not knowing how they would receive us. But since there was no avoiding it, it was concluded that one should go up to the House, while the rest staid behind to see the Issue. In conclusion I went to the Plantation, and it proved the same that we came from. The *Indians* were all amazed to see me, and began to ask many Questions. But I prevented them by falling into a Swoon, occasion'd by the heat of the House, and the scent of Meat that was boyling over the

suppressed the entire paragraph; actually, the great yield of gold in the seventeenth century came from rivers flowing into the Gulf of San Miguel.

<sup>1</sup> Probably a palm of the *Attalea* family, whose sweet sap is often fermented to make a refreshing drink.

Fire. The *Indians* were very officious to help me in this Extremity, and when I revived, they gave me a little to eat. Then they enquired of me for the other four Men, for whom they presently sent, and brought all but *Gobson*, who was left a little further off, and treated us all very kindly. For our long expected Guides were now returned from the North side,<sup>1</sup> and gave large Commendations of the kindness and generosity of our Men; by which means all the *Indians* were become now again our very good Friends. The *Indian*, who was so particularly kind to us, perceiving Mr. *Gobson* was not yet arrived at the Plantation, carried out Victuals to him, and after he was a little refresh'd with that, brought him up to us. So that now we were all together again, and had a great deal of care taken of us.

Here we stayed seven Days to refresh our selves, and then took our March again.<sup>2</sup> For we were desirous to get to the North Seas as soon as we could, and they were now more willing to guide us than ever before; since the Guides our Party took with them had not only been dismiss'd civilly, but with Presents also of Axes, Beads, &c. The *Indians* therefore of the Village where we now were, order'd four lusty young Men to conduct us down again to the River over which the Tree was fallen, who going now with a good will, carried us thither in one Day; whereas we were three Days the first time in going thither. When we came thither, we marched about a Mile up the River,

<sup>1</sup> Dampier's party had been conducted to the Concepción river, after crossing the Chepo and very high mountains; the journey had taken 23 days. At the river's mouth were many Indians who had 'settled themselves here for the benefit of Trade with the Privateers; their Commodities were Yams, Potatoes, Plantains, Sugar, Canes, Fowls and Eggs'. Ten miles away were the little islands especially favoured by international buccaneers for watering and careening.

From the vessel of Captain Tristian, a French privateer, lying at La Sound's Key, the party obtained beads, knives, scissors, and looking-glasses as presents for the Indian guides: each of them also received 'half a Dollar' from each of the 44 buccaneers. 'They were so well satisfied with these that they returned with joy to their friends, and were very kind to our Consorts whom we left behind' (Dampier's *Voyage Round the World*).

<sup>2</sup> Wafer originally (Sloane 3236) added here: 'It will not be amiss to take notice what an alteration the hope of game causeth in the Heathens as well as Christians for this made those that were our Enemyes before to be now our freinds.'

where lay a Canoa, into which we all Imbarked, and the *Indians* guided us up the same River which we before, thro' mistake, had strove to go down.<sup>1</sup> The *Indians* padled stoutly against the Stream till Night, and then we Lodged at a House, where these Men gave such large Commendations of our Men, who were gone to the North Sea, that the Master of the House treated us after the best manner. The next Day we set out again, with two *Indians* more, who made six in all, to Row or Paddle us; and our Condition now was well altered.

In six Days time after this, they brought us to *Lacenta's* House,<sup>2</sup> who had before saved our Lives.

This House is situated on a fine little Hill, on which grows the stateliest Grove of Cotton Trees that ever I saw. The Bodies of these Trees were generally six foot in Diameter, nay, some eight, nine, ten, eleven; for four *Indians* and myself took hand in hand round a Tree, and could not fathom it by three foot. Here was likewise a stately Plantain Walk, and a Grove of other small Trees, that would make a pleasant artificial Wilderness, if Industry and Art were bestowed on it.

The Circumference of this pleasant little Hill, contains at least 100 Acres of Land; and is a Peninsula of an Oval form, almost surrounded with two great Rivers, one coming from the East, the other from the West; which approaching within 40 foot of each other, at the front of the Peninsula, separate again, embracing the Hill, and meet on the other side, making there one pretty large River, which runs very swift. There is therefore but one way to come in toward this Seat; which, as I before observed, is not above 40 foot wide, between the Rivers on each side: and 'tis fenced with hollow Bamboes, Popes-heads<sup>3</sup> and Prickle-pears, so thick set from one side the Neck of Land to the other, that 'tis impossible for an Enemy to approach it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, son of the Colombian historian, and himself an author of distinction, explored the Pacific side of the buccaneers' routes in 1887. He identifies the river which Wafer went down, returning up a few days later, as the Cañaza. But the Cañaza does not run 'somewhat northward'.

<sup>2</sup> 'The King's Pallace', in the original.

<sup>3</sup> A variety of *Echinocactus*.

<sup>4</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'On this hill live 50 of the King's favorites which on the least displeasure are removed and others placed in their roomes

On this Hill live Fifty Principal Men of the Country, all under *Lacenta's* Command, who is as a Prince over all the South part of the *Isthmus of Darien*; the *Indians* both there and on the North side also, paying him great respect. But the South side is his Country, and this Hill his Seat or Palace. There is only one Canoa belonging to it, which serves to ferry over *Lacenta* and the rest of them.

When we were arrived at this Place, *Lacenta* discharged our Guides, and sent them back again, telling us, That 'twas not possible for us to Travel to the North side at this Season; for the Rainy Season was now in its height, and Travelling very bad; but told us we should stay with him, and he would take care of us.<sup>1</sup> And we were forc'd to comply with him.

We had not been long here before an Occurrence happen'd, which tended much to the increasing the good Opinion *Lacenta* and his People had conceiv'd of us, and brought me into particular Esteem with them.

It so happen'd, that one of *Lacenta's* Wives being indisposed, was to be let Blood; which the *Indians* perform in this manner. The Patient is seated on a Stone in the River, and one with a small Bow shoots little Arrows into the naked Body of the Patient, up and down; shooting them as fast as he can, and not missing any part. But the Arrows are gaged, so that they penetrate no farther than we generally thrust our Lancets. And if by chance they hit a Vein which is full of Wind, and the Blood spurts out a little, they will leap and skip about, shewing many Antick Gestures, by way of rejoicing and triumph.

I was by while this was performing on *Lacenta's* Lady, and, perceiving their Ignorance, told *Lacenta*, That if he pleased, I

and that man that is out of favor had as good be out of his life.' *Lacenta* seems to have been a Chief Paramount over smaller chieftains or heads of clans; the same custom prevails among the Cuna of the San Blas territory to-day, the Nele of Aligandi, for example, receiving respect from the adjacent tribes, each with its family chief or *sagila*.

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'Mark now how fortune turned her frownes and smiled on me. It soe happened that the day after our arrivall at the King's Pallace one of his Queens being indisposed', proceeding as on line 19.

The natives of New Guinea still practise phlebotomy in a similar manner; specially small bows and arrows are used, and the weapons are usually shot into the temple of the patient to relieve headache.

would shew him a better way, without putting the Patient to so much Torment. Let me see, says he; and at his Command, I bound up her Arm with a piece of Bark, and with my Lancet breached a Vein. But this rash attempt had like to have cost me my Life. For *Lacenta* seeing the Blood issue out in a Stream, which us'd to come only drop by drop, got hold of his Lance, and swore by his Tooth, that if she did otherwise than well, he would have my Heart's Blood. I was not moved, but desired him to be patient, and I drew off about 12 Ounces, and bound up her Arm, and desired she might rest till the next Day, by which means the Fever abated, and she had not another Fit. This gained me so much Reputation,<sup>1</sup> that *Lacenta* came to me, and before all his Attendants, bowed, and kiss'd my Hand. Then the rest came thick about me, and some kissed my Hand, others my Knee, and some my Foot, after which I was taken up into a Hammock, and carried on Men's Shoulders, *Lacenta* himself making a Speech in my Praise, and commending me as much Superiour to any of their Doctors. Thus I was carried from Plantation to Plantation, and lived in great Splendor and Repute, administring both Physick and Phlebotomy to those that wanted. For tho' I lost my Salves and Plaisters, when the Negro ran away with my Knapsack, yet I preserv'd a Box of Instruments, and a few Medicaments wrapt up in an Oil Cloth, by having them in my Pocket, where I generally carried them.

I lived thus some<sup>2</sup> Months among the *Indians*, who in a manner ador'd me. Some of these *Indians* had been Slaves to the *Spaniards*, and had made their Escapes; which I suppose was the cause of their expressing a desire of Baptism:<sup>3</sup> but more to have a *European* Name given them, than for anything they know of Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'that the King Queen and all the nobles of the Realme seemed more my Servants than Equalls. The King himself before all his nobles came bowing to me and kissed my hand.'

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 'three months, and the heathen did in a manner worshippe me and I was forced to yeald to their humors.'

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 'and in compliance of their good inclinacions and at their importunate request I presumed to baptize severall although not qualified, yett I did it with a good intent and if I offended therein I am ready to submit to my superiors.'

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, too, the *Indians* then, as now, liked to have a name which could

During my abode with *Lacenta*,<sup>1</sup> I often accompanied him a Hunting, wherein he took great delight, here being good Game. I was one time, about the beginning of the dry Season, accompanying him toward the South-East part of the Country, and we pass'd by a River where the *Spaniards* were gathering Gold. I took this River to be one of those which comes from the South-East, and runs into the Gulph of *St. Michael*.<sup>2</sup> When we came near the Place where they wrought, we stole softly through the Woods, and placing our selves behind the great Trees, looked on them a good while, they not seeing us. The manner of their getting Gold it is as follows. They have little Wooden Dishes, which they dip softly into the Water, and take it up half full of Sand, which they draw gently out of the Water; and at every dipping they take up Gold mix'd with the Sand and Water, more or less. This they shake and the Sand riseth, and goes over the Brims of the Dish with the Water; but the Gold settles to the bottom. This done, they bring it out and dry it in the Sun, and then pound it in a Mortar. Then they take it be unreservedly made known to foreigners. The *Cuna* are, in common with many other primitive folk, frequently reticent about their native appellations, for there is magic in names: sometimes they cannot be induced by any persuasion to divulge them. Names of the dead must not be given to sons, nor spoken aloud.

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 interjects: '(for Anthonio was dead and *Lacenta* succeeded him)'. This is the first time that the name '*Lacenta*' is used in Sloane MS. 3236; the word does not sound as though it had a *Cuna* origin, nor is it a usual Spanish baptismal name. In 1698, when Hugh Rose, among the first of the Scots colony, landed in Darien, he met 'Captain Diego, now the most powerful of Indian chiefs', Pedro, Andreas (Andres), and Ambrosio, all *Cuna* head-men who had assumed Spanish names, but the name *Lacenta* is not mentioned. 'Andreas' sang the praises of Captain Davis, whose expedition he said he had accompanied to the South Seas, and of Captain 'Swain' (Swan): they were his 'particular friends'. Captain Aliston 'one of the eldest privateers alive' also met the Scots, and introduced them to Golden Island and the coast; he seems to have retained the friendship of the Darien Indians for the eighteen years since he had gone raiding with Sharp. But he does not seem to have mentioned *Lacenta*.

<sup>2</sup> A number of Isthmian rivers run from the northerly slopes to form that great highway of Darien, the *Chucunaque*; thus, with the *Yavisa*, *Aputi*, &c., from the east, and several from farther south (as the *Tuira*, *Cana* and *Santa Maria*) unite to form one great flood entering the Gulf of San Miguel. Many are gold-bearing. The *Spaniards* seen by Wafer were perhaps on the *Tuira* river.

out and spread it on Paper, and having a Load-stone they move that over it, which draws all the Iron, &c. from it, and then leaves the Gold clean from Ore or Filth; and this they bottle up in Gourds or Calabashes. In this manner they work during the dry Season, which is three Months; for in the wet time the Gold is washed from the Mountains by violent Rains, and then commonly the Rivers are very deep; but now in the gathering Season, when they are fallen again, they are not above a Foot deep. Having spent the dry Season in gathering, they embark in small Vessels for *Santa Maria*<sup>1</sup> Town; and if they meet with good Success and a favourable Time, they carry with them, by Report, (for I learnt these Particulars of a *Spaniard* whom we took at *Santa Maria* under Captain *Sharp*) 18 or 20 thousand Pound weight of Gold. But whether they gather more or less, 'tis incredible to report the store of Gold which is yearly wash'd down out of these Rivers.<sup>2</sup>

During these Progresses I made with *Lacenta*, my four Companions staid behind at his Seat; but I had by this time so far ingratiated my self with *Lacenta*, that he would never go any where without me, and I plainly perceiv'd he intended to keep me in this Country all the days of my Life; which raised some anxious Thoughts in me, but I conceal'd them as well as I could.

Pursuing our Sport one Day, it hapned we started a *Pecary*, which held the *Indians* and their Dogs in play the greatest part of the Day; till *Lacenta* was almost spent for want of Victuals, and was so troubled at his ill Success, that he impatiently wished for some better way of managing this sort of Game.

I now understood their Language indifferent well, and finding what troubled him, I took this opportunity<sup>3</sup> to attempt the

<sup>1</sup> Sloane 3236 says: 'so called by the Spaniards but the Indians call all that country *Andriell* which in their language signifies much 'Treasure'. '*Andriell*' seems to be a confused form of the native word which the Spaniards rendered as '*Dariel*', '*Darien*', and *Tarena*, among other spellings.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 'and I believe one great reason why they did not follow us was because they regarded more their own profit than the good of their country, for this was the mine where wee heard there was 300 armed men when wee first landed, this place is not above 30 leagues or 35 from *Panama* and thither all the treasure is carryed where most of these gold merchants live; soe much for the Gold mines.'

<sup>3</sup> *Wafer's* original continues in a rather different form: '(seeing his



getting my Liberty to depart, by commending to him our *English Dogs*, and making an Offer of bringing him a few of them from *England*, if he would suffer me to go thither for a short time. He demurr'd at this Motion a while; but at length he swore by his Tooth, laying his Fingers on it, That I should have my Liberty, and for my Sake the other four with me; provided I would promise and swear by my Tooth, That I would return and marry among them; for he had made me a Promise of his Daughter in Marriage, but she was not then marriageable. I accepted of the Conditions, and he further promised that at my return he would do for me beyond my Expectation.

I returned him Thanks, and was the next Day dismissed under the Convoy of seven lusty Fellows; and we had four Women to carry our Provision, and my Cloaths, which were only a Linnen Frock and pair of Breeches. These I saved to cover my Nakedness, if ever I should come among Christians again; for at this time I went naked as the Salvages, and was painted by their Women; but I would not suffer them to prick my Skin, to rub the Paint in, as they use to do, but only to lay it on in little Specks.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we departed from the Neighbourhood of the South Seas, where *Lacenta* was Hunting, to his Seat or Palace, where I arrived in about 15 Days, to the great Joy of my Consorts; who had staid there, during this Hunting Expedition I made with *Lacenta* to the South-East.

After many Salutations on both sides, and some joyful Tears, I told them how I got my Liberty of *Lacenta*, and what I

majesty in a great rage), to adress myselfe to him in this manner O King be pacifyed and give me leave to parte from your majesty but a small time and I will bring you some of our English Doggs which are not only able to Seize but kill the strongest Peccary in the whole Kingdome'.

<sup>1</sup> The chief body-paints used by the Cuna are (1) black, 'caruto' or 'sabdur' obtained chiefly from *Genipa americana*; (2), dark-red, or russet, yielded by the 'Dragon's-blood tree' (*Pterocarpus draco*) whose fragrant resin is also burnt in fumigations of the sick and during other ceremonies; and (3) orange-red, or 'urucu', from *Bixa orellana*. Body-painting may have been assumed partly as fanciful ornament, but had its magical use also; to ensure success when hunting, for example, definite ceremonial painting was necessary on the part at least of official magicians.

promised at my return, and they were very glad at the hopes of getting away, after so long a stay in a Savage Country.

I stayed here some few Days till I was refreshed, and then with my Companions marched away for the North Seas; having a strong Convoy of armed *Indians* for our Guides.

We travelled over many very high Mountains; at last we came to one far surpassing the rest in height, to which we were four Days gradually ascending, tho' now and then with some Descent between whiles. Being on the top, I perceived a strange Giddiness in my Head; and enquiring both of my Companions, and the *Indians*, they all assured me they were in the like Condition; which I can only impute to the height of the Mountains, and the clearness of the Air.<sup>1</sup> I take this part of the Mountains to have been higher than either that which we cross'd with Captain *Sharp*, or that which Mr. *Dampier* and the rest of our Party cross'd in their return. For from this Eminence, the tops of the Mountains over which we passed before, seem'd very much below us, and sometimes we could not see them for the Clouds between; but when the Clouds flew over the tops of the Hill, they would break, and then we could discern them, looking as it were thro' so many Loop-holes.

I desired two Men to lie on my Legs, while I laid my Head over that side of the Mountain which was most perpendicular; but could see no Ground for the Clouds that were between. The *Indians* carried us over a Ridge so narrow that we were forced to straddle over on our Britches; and the *Indians* took the same Care of themselves, handling their Bows, Arrows, and Luggage, from one to another. As we descended, we were all cured of our Giddiness.

When we came to the foot of the Mountain we found a River that ran into the North Seas,<sup>2</sup> and near the side of it were a few *Indian* Houses, which afforded us indifferent good

<sup>1</sup> Wafer was right: this was typical mountain-sickness or 'puna', as it is called in the high regions of the South American Andes. But the Isthmian mountains, south of the Chagres, are nowhere more than 6,000 ft. high; and the pass crossed by the party was probably much less. The effect of altitude may have been increased by contrast with the heavy and sultry air of the lowlands, and the physical effort of rapid ascent.

<sup>2</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'being the first I had seen for 17 months that disimbogued that way'.

Entertainment. Here we lay one Night, it being the first House I had seen for six Days; my Lodging, by the way, being in a Hammock made fast to two Trees, and my Covering a Plantain-Leaf.

The next Morning we set forward, and in two Days time arrived at the Sea-side, and were met by 40 of the best sort of *Indians* in the Country who congratulated our coming, and welcom'd us to their Houses. They were all in their finest Robes, which are long white Gowns, reaching to their Ancles, with Fringes at the bottom, and in their Hands they had Half Pikes. But of these Things, and such other Particulars as I observ'd during my Abode in this Country, I shall say more when I come to describe it.

We presently enquired of these *Indians*, when they expected any Ships? They told us they knew not, but would enquire; and therefore they sent for one of their Conjurers, who immediately went to work to raise the Devil, to enquire of him at what time a Ship would arrive here; for they are very expert and skilful in their sort of Diabolical Conjurations.<sup>1</sup> We were in the House with them, and they first began to work with making a Partition with Hammocks, that the *Pawawers*,<sup>2</sup> for so they call these Conjurers, might be by themselves. They continued some time at their Exercise, and we could hear them make most hideous Yellings and Shrieks;<sup>3</sup> imitating the Voices of all their kind of Birds and Beasts. With their own Noise, they join'd that of several Stones struck together, and of Conch-shells, and

<sup>1</sup> Cuna ceremonial in connexion with the occult is complicated but definite; the duties and powers of officials are precisely allocated. A debt is due to the late Baron Nordenskiöld, who pays tribute to Wafer's accuracy, for the clarification of Cuna ideas and accounts of magic rites.

<sup>2</sup> This word may be the Cuna 'pohwey', to call out or cry; or Wafer confounded the word heard in Darien with the Algonquin 'pow-wow', early taken into the vocabulary of European settlers in southerly North America, east of the Mississippi. He might have heard 'pow-wow' in Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Sloane MS. 3236 continues: 'but whether it was that the Devill was employed in more important bussiness or whether their hard questions putt him to his trumps, or which is most likely he haveing an antipathy against Christians and therefore he would not answeare their questions, but whatever the matter was noe answeare they could gett before wee were turned out of doores and everything that belonged to us.'

of a sorry sort of Drums made of hollow Bamboes, which they beat upon; making a jarring Noise also with Strings fasten'd to the larger Bones of Beasts. And everynow and then they would make a dreadful Exclamation, and clattering all of a sudden, would as suddenly make a Pause and a profound Silence. But finding that after a considerable Time no Answer was made them, they concluded that 'twas because we were in the House, and so turn'd us out, and went to Work again. But still finding no return, after an Hour or more, they made a new Search in our Apartment; and finding some of our Cloaths hanging up in a Basket against the Wall, they threw them out of Doors in great Disdain. Then they fell once more to their *Pawawing*; and after a little time, they came out with their Answer, but all in a Muck-sweat; so that they first went down to the River and wash'd themselves, and then came and deliver'd the Oracle to us, which was to this Effect: That the 10th Day from that time there would arrive two Ships; and that in the Morning of the 10th Day we should hear first one Gun, and sometime after that another: That one of us should die soon after; and that going aboard we should lose one of our Guns: all which fell out exactly according to the Prediction.

For on the 10th Day in the Morning we heard the Guns, first one, and then another, in that manner that was told us; and one of our Guns or Fusees was lost in going aboard the Ships. For we five, and three of the *Indians* went off to the Ships in a *Canoa*; but as we cross'd the Bar of the River,<sup>1</sup> it overset; where

<sup>1</sup> The Concepción. Three months previously Dampier's party had reached the same point (on 24 May), and had gone aboard a vessel lying at La Sound's Key, captained by the French privateer Captain Tristian. At Springer's Key, nearby, they had found a buccaneer fleet of 8 sail, commanded by 4 English, 3 French, and 1 Dutch captains, and with them went cruising. Dampier was at first with the French captain 'Archembo', the English vessels being overmanned; he had 'no cause to dislike the captain, but his French seamen were the Saddest Creatures that ever I was among'. Presently the buccaneers took a well-armed Spanish tartan, a fast craft carrying one large sail and a jib, which had just parted from a Spanish 'armadilla' sent to search the Sambaloes for pirates; and the English asked Captain Peter Wright to fit up the vessel and assume command. This was agreed. Dampier joined Wright (at St. Andres island off the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua, and sixteen leagues south of Catalina, or Old Providence Island), and was with him when Wafer was restored to his friends.

Mr. *Gopson*, one of my Consorts, was like to be drowned; and tho' we recover'd him out of the Water, yet he lost his Gun according to the Prediction. I know not how this happen'd as to his Gun; but ours were all lash'd down to the side of the Canoa. And in the *West-Indies* we never go into a Canoa, which a little matter oversets, but we make fast our Guns to the Sides or Seats, and I suppose Mr. *Gopson*, who was a very careful and sensible Man, had lash'd down his also, tho' not fast enough.

Being overset, and our Canoa turn'd up-side down, we got to Shore as well as we could, and drag'd Mr. *Gopson* with us, tho' with difficulty. Then we put off again, and kept more along the Shore, and at length stood over to *La Sounds* Key, where the two Ships lay, an *English* Sloop, and a *Spanish* Tartan, which the *English* had taken but two or three Days before.<sup>1</sup> We knew by the make of this last that it was a *Spanish* Vessel, before we came up with it. But seeing it in Company with an *English* one, we thought they must be Consorts; and whether the *Spanish* Vessel should prove to be under the *English* one, or the *English* under that, we were resolv'd to put it to the venture, and get aboard, being quite tir'd with our stay among the wild *Indians*. The *Indians* were more afraid of its being a Vessel of *Spaniards*, their Enemies as well as ours. For this was another Particular they told us 10 Days before, when they were *Pawawing*, that when their Oracle inform'd them that two Vessels would arrive at this time, they understood by their Dæmons Answer that one of them would be an *English* one; but as to the other, he spake so dubiously, that they were much afraid it would be a *Spanish* one, and 'twas not without great difficulty that we now persuaded them to go aboard with us. Which was another remarkable Circumstance; since this Vessel was not only a *Spanish* one, but actually under the Command of the *Spaniards* at the time of the *Pawawing*, and some Days after, till taken by the *English*.

<sup>1</sup> The tartan had been captured several weeks previously; see Note on p. 25. Sloane MS. 3236 continues: "The ships lay at La Sounds Key which is about a league from the mouth of the river one of them was an English sloop come from Jamaica to trade haveing liquior and other comodities to sell wherewith I entertained my Indian friends."

We went aboard the *English Sloop*, and our *Indian Friends* with us, and were received with a very hearty welcome. The four *English Men* with me were presently known and caress'd by the Ships Crew; but I sat a while cringing upon my Hams among the *Indians*, after their Fashion, painted as they were, and all naked but only about the Waist, and with my Nose-piece (of which more hereafter) hanging over my Mouth. I was willing to try if they would know me in this Disguise; and 'twas the better part of an Hour before one of the Crew, looking more narrowly upon me, cry'd out, Here's our Doctor; and immediately they all congratulated my Arrival among them.<sup>1</sup> I did what I could presently to wash off my Paint, but 'twas near a Month before I could get tolerably rid of it, having had my Skin so long stain'd with it, and the Pigment dried on in the Sun. And when it did come off, 'twas usually with the peeling off of Skin and all. As for Mr. *Gopson*, tho' we brought him alive to the Ship, yet he did not recover his Fatigues, and his drenching in the Water, but having languish'd aboard about three Days, he died there<sup>2</sup> at *La Sound's Key*; and his Death verified another part of the *Pawawer's* Prediction. Our *Indians*, having been kindly entertain'd aboard for about 6 or 7 Days; and many others of them, who went to and fro with their Wives and Children, and *Lacenta* among the rest, visiting us

<sup>1</sup> Dampier says in his MS. (Sloane 3236): 'I was at La Sounds Key when the Chirurgeon came aboard whose face was painted as the Indians paint theirs, by which I perceived he had been more esteemed by them then the rest of his Consorts and complying with their customs became more familiar by which means he not only gott more of their Language but was in a capacity to make better observations than the rest.'

<sup>2</sup> Wafer, quoted by Dampier (Sloane MS. 3236), continues: 'The King [i.e. *Lacenta*] coming to the seaside before wee went from hence came aboard to see me and persuaded me to goe ashore with him telling me that he would shew me something which he did not question would induce me to come thither againe. I readily agreed to his motion and went with him ashore and not farr from the river's mouth he carryed me to a spott of ground where groweth nothing but blood wood now said he come hither at any time and I will load your ship with this wood which I realy intended knowing if the wood would not enrich me I could purchase gold and silver enough of them at an easy rate.' Dampier writes: 'Thus ends the Chirurgeons voyage and observations', and, later, 'I tooke them out of his own writing'. The Scots Colony in Darien searched vainly for this dye-wood in 1698.

about a Fortnight or three Weeks, we at length took leave of them, except 2 or 3 of them who would needs go with us to Windward; and we set Sail, with the Tartan in our Company, first to the more Eastern Isles of the *Sambaloe's*, and then towards the Coast of *Cartagene*.

But I shall not enter into the Discourse of our Voyage after this, Mr. *Dampier*, who was in the same Vessel, having done it particularly. It may suffice just to intimate that I was cruising with him up and down the *West-India* Coast and Islands, partly under Capt. *Wright*, and partly under Capt. *Yanky*; till such time as Capt. *Yanky* left Mr. *Dampier* and the rest under Capt. *Wright*, at the Isle of Salt *Tortuga*, as Mr. *Dampier* relates in the 3d Chapter of his *Voyage round the World*, p. 58. I went then away with Capt. *Yanky*; first to the Isle of *Ash*,<sup>1</sup> where the *French* took us, as he relates occasionally, Chap. 4. p. 68. as also their turning us there ashore; our being taken in by Capt. *Tristian*, another *French* Man; his carrying us with him almost to *Petit-Guaves*; our Men seizing the Ship when he was gone ashore, carrying it back to the Isle of *Ash*, and there taking in the rest of our Crew; the taking the *French* Ship with Wines, and the other in which Capt. *Cook*, who was then of our Crew, went afterwards to the South Seas, after having first been at *Virginia*. So that we arrived in *Virginia* with these Prizes about 8 or 9 Months after Mr. *Dampier* came thither.<sup>2</sup> I set out with

<sup>1</sup> Sp. 'Isle de la Vaca' (Cow Island); Fr. 'Isle de Vache', and thence to the English buccaneers by an easy transformation, 'Isle of Ash'.

<sup>2</sup> The incident to which Wafer gives so few words reflects the resource of Captain Davis and of John Cook of St. Kitt's. Cook was quartermaster, or second-in-command, with Captain Yanky, the Dutchman, and, when a certain Spanish prize was taken, claimed command, according to the Law of Privateers. The vessel was given him; Wafer and his 'consorts' were among the men who elected to join Cook, and goods were shared. But Cook lacked the authority of a commission, and the French changed their minds, taking back the vessel and goods and marooning most of the English. A few, Davis and Cook among them, were taken aboard by Tristian, to Petit Guaves, and there, outside the harbour, when the French captain and crew went ashore, the tables were swiftly turned. Cook and Davis sailed the ship back to the 'Isle of Ash', picked up their friends before the French Governor realized what had happened, and not only captured a vessel laden with wine as she sailed unsuspecting towards her anchorage, but also took a well-armed ship of 18 guns. This exploit made the Caribbean trebly dangerous.







him also in that new Expedition to the South Seas under Capt. *Cook*, tho' he forgot to mention me in that part of his Voyages. We went round *Terra del Fuego*, and so up the South-Sea Coast, along *Chili*, *Peru* and *Mexico*, as he relates at large in his 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Chapters. There, p. 223, he tells how Capt. *Davis*, who had succeeded Capt. *Cook* at his Death, broke off Consortship with Capt. *Swan*, whom we had met with in the South Seas. That himself being desirous to stand over to the *East-Indies*, went aboard Capt. *Swan*: but I remain'd aboard the same Ship, now under Capt. *Davis*, and return'd with him the way I came. Some few Particulars that I observ'd in that Return, I shall speak of at the Conclusion of this Book. In the mean while having given this Summary Account of the Course of my Travels, from my first parting with Mr. *Dampier* in the *Isthmus*, till my last leaving him in the *South Seas*, I shall now go on with the particular Description of the *Isthmus of America*, which was the main Thing I intended in publishing these Relations.

Not only the Spanish and the English West Indian officials, but some of their French brother-buccaneers, were now hostile. Virginia, and then the 'Sea of the South', offered better chances than the West Indies; and a bold project was formed for entering the Pacific by way of the Straits of Magellan.

## Mr. Wafer's Description of the Isthmus of America.

THE Country I am going to describe is the narrowest part of the *Isthmus of America*, which is more peculiarly call'd the *Isthmus of Darien*; probably, from the great *River* of that Name,<sup>1</sup> wherewith its Northern Coast is bounded to the East. For beyond this River the Land spreads so to the East and North-East, as that on the other Coast does to the South and South-East, that it can no further be call'd an *Isthmus*. It is mostly comprehended between the Latitudes of 8 and 10 N. but its breadth, in the narrowest part, is much about one Degree. How far it reaches in length Westward under the Name of the *Isthmus of Darien*; whether as far as *Honduras*, or *Nicaragua*, or no further than the River *Chagre*, or the Towns of *Portobel* and *Panama*, I cannot say.<sup>2</sup>

This last is the Boundary of what I mean to describe; and I shall be most particular as to the middle part even of this, as being the Scene of my Abode and Ramble in that Country. Tho' what I shall have occasion to say as to this part of the *Isthmus* will be in some measure applicable to the Country even beyond *Panama*.

Were I to fix particular Limits to this narrowest part of the

<sup>1</sup> The word *Darien*, or one of its many variants, was applied at various times (1) to the great north-running river, often formerly called the Rio Grande, now known as the Atrato; (2) to the south-running river debouching into the Gulf of San Miguel (the Tuirá or Santa María); (3) to the northern gulf now generally called Urabá; (4) to the Gulf of San Miguel; (5) to the region of the Gulf of Urabá, and, frequently (6) to the whole Isthmian territory whose natural boundaries are the Chagres (properly Chagre) river, westward, and the Atrato, eastward, including both coasts.

<sup>2</sup> The jurisdiction of the Audiencia of Panama (chief city of the 'Reino de Tierra Firme', called 'Castilla de Oro') covered 80 leagues of longitude from the Gulf of San Miguel to the town of Concepción de Veragua (a small gold-washing town reached from Almirante Bay); and 24 leagues of latitude, according to Dr. Alonso Criado de Castilla, Oidor of Panama, 1575. The narrowest width of Tierra Firme, the judge stated, was 12 leagues; but the king's highway (camino real) between Nombre de Dios and Panama, was 18 leagues long, on account of the broken country traversed.

*American Isthmus*, I would assign for its Western Term a Line which should run from the Mouth of the River *Chagre*, where it falls into the North Sea, to the nearest part of the South Sea, Westward of *Panama*; including thereby that City, and *Portobel*, with the Rivers of *Cheapo* and *Chagre*. And I should draw a Line also from Point *Garachina*, or the South part of the Gulph of St. *Michael*, directly East, to the nearest part of the great River of *Darien*, for the Eastern Boundary, so as to take *Caret Bay*<sup>1</sup> into the *Isthmus*. On the North and South it is sufficiently bounded by each of those vast Oceans. And considering that this is the narrowest Land that disjoins them, and how exceeding great the Compass is that must be fetch'd from one Shore to the other by Sea, since it has the North and South *America* for each Extreme, 'tis of a very singular Situation, very pleasant and agreeable.

Nor doth either of these Oceans fall in at once upon the Shore, but is intercepted by a great many valuable Islands, that lie scatter'd along each Coast, the *Bastimento's* and others, but especially the long Range of the *Sambaloe's*<sup>2</sup> on the North side; and the *Kings* or *Pearl* Islands, *Perica* and others in the Bay of *Panama*, on the South-side. This Bay is caus'd by the bending of the *Isthmus*. And for the bigness of it, there is not, it may be, a more pleasant and advantageous one any where to be found.

The Land of this Continent is almost every where of an unequal Surface, distinguish'd with Hills and Valleys, of great variety for heighth, depth, and extent. The Valleys are generally water'd with Rivers, Brooks, and Perennial Springs, with which the Country very much abounds. They fall some into the North, and others into the South Sea; and do most of them take their Rise from a Ridge or Chain of higher Hills than the

<sup>1</sup> In the west curve of the Gulf of Urabá.

<sup>2</sup> The long series of islands, said to number more than 400, extending from Punta San Blas almost to Cape Tiburón. The whole archipelago is frequently called the 'Mulatas' (from, says Gassó, *mulá*, a buzzard common in the region); but the name San Blas, corrupted by buccaneers into Samblous, Sambaloes, Sumblers, &c., has long been applied to the chief habitable groups. They, or various groups, have also been called the Mandingas, Cativas, Cabezas, and Guanas (Iguanas). The islands were uninhabited in Wafer's day: now, with the migratory movement of the Cuna tribes, the population of the archipelago and nearby coast is said to be 20,000 to 25,000.

rest, running the length of the *Isthmus*, and in a manner parallel to the Shore; which for distinction's-sake, I shall call the *Main Ridge*.

This Ridge is of an unequal Breadth, and trends along bending as the *Isthmus* it self doth. 'Tis in most parts nearest the Edge of the North Sea, seldom above 10 or 15 Miles distant. We had always a fair and clear View of the North Sea from thence, and the various makings of the Shore, together with the adjacent Islands, render'd it a very agreeable Prospect; but the South Sea I could not see from any part of the Ridge. Not that the distance of it from the South Sea is so great, as that the Eye could not reach so far, especially from such an Eminence, were the Country between a Level or Champian. But tho' there are here and there Plains and Valleys of a considerable Extent, and some open Places, yet do they lie intermix'd with considerable Hills; and those too so cloath'd with tall Woods, that they much hinder the Prospect there would otherwise be. Neither on the other side is the main Ridge discern'd from that side, by reason of those Hills that lie between it and the South Sea; upon ascending each of which in our Return from the South Sea, we expected to have been upon the main Ridge, and to have seen the North Sea. And tho' still the further we went that way, the Hills we cross'd seemed the larger; yet, by this means, we were less sensible of the heighth of the main Ridge, than if we had climb'd up to it next way out of a low Country.

On the North side of the main Ridge, there are either no Hills at all, or such as are rather gentle Declivities or gradual Subsidings of the Ridge, than Hills distinct from it. And tho' this side of the Country is every where covered with Woods, and more universally too,<sup>1</sup> for it is all one continued Forrest, yet the Eye from that heighth commands the less distant Northern Shore with much Ease and Pleasure.

Nor is the main Ridge it self carried on every where with a continued Top; but is rather a Row or Chain of distinct Hills than one prolonged, and accordingly hath frequent and large Valleys disjoining the several Eminencies that compose its

<sup>1</sup> From Mexico to the north of South America it is a general rule that the Atlantic slope is wetter, and therefore greener and more thickly wooded, than the watershed of the Pacific.

length. And these Valleys, as they make even the Ridge it self the more useful and habitable, so are they some of them so deep in their Descent, as even to admit a Passage for Rivers. For thus the River *Chagre*, which rises from some Hills near the South Sea, runs along in an oblique North Westerly Course, till it finds it self a Passage into the North Sea; tho' the Chain of Hills, if I mistake not, is extended much farther to the West, even to the Lake of *Nicaragua*.

The Rivers that water this Country are some of them indifferent large; tho' but few Navigable, as having Bars and Scholes at the Mouths.<sup>1</sup> On the North Sea Coast the Rivers are for the most part very small; for rising generally from the main Ridge, which lies near that Shore, their Course is very short. The River of *Darien* is indeed a very large one; but the depth at the Entrance is not answerable to the wideness of its Mouth, tho' 'tis deep enough further in. But from thence to *Chagre*, the whole length of this Coast, they are little better than Brooks. Nor is the River of *Conception* any other, which comes out over against *La Sound's* Key in the *Sambaloe's*. The River of *Chagre* is pretty considerable; for it has a long bending Coast rising as it does from the South and East-part of the *Isthmus*, and at such a distance from its Outlet. But in general, the North Coast is plentifully water'd; yet is it chiefly with Springs and Rivulets trickling down from the Neighbouring Hills.

The Soil on this North Coast is various; generally 'tis good Land, rising in Hills; but to the Sea there are here and there Swamps, yet seldom above half a Mile broad.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusively from *Caret* Bay, which lies in the River of *Darien*, and is the only Harbour in it, to the Promontory near *Golden Island*, the Shore of the *Isthmus* is indifferently fruitful, partly Sandy Bay; but part of it is drowned, swampy, Mangrove Land, where there is no going ashore but up to the middle in

<sup>1</sup> Caused by tumultuous floods, carrying large quantities of vegetable debris and silt from the mountains in the rainy season.

<sup>2</sup> Mangroves, thickly tangled, rising from black mud, infested with biting flies and overrun with crabs, have always formed an effectual barrier against ready entry into the north coast of *Darien*; perennially hot and humid, often lacking fresh water since rivers are lost amongst the brackish swamps, the greater part of the littoral has resisted the occupation of white men since it was first seen in 1500.

Mud. The Shore of this Coast rises in Hills presently; and the main Ridge is about 5 or 6 Miles distant. *Caret Bay* hath 2 or 3 Rivulets of fresh Water falling into it, as I am inform'd, for I have not been there. It is a little Bay, and two small Islands lying before it make it an indifferent good Harbour, and hath clear Anchoring Ground, without any Rocks. These Islands are pretty high Land, cloathed with variety of Trees.

To the Westward of the Cape<sup>1</sup> at the Entrance of the River *Darien*, is another fine Sandy Bay.<sup>2</sup> In the Cod of it lies a little, low, swampy Island, about which 'tis Shole-water and dirty Ground, not fit for Shipping; and the Shore of the *Isthmus* behind and about it, is swampy Land over-grown with Mangroves; till after three or four Mile the Land ascends up to the main Ridge. But though the Cod of this Bay be so bad, yet the Entrance of it is deep Water, and hard sandy bottom, excellent for anchoring; and has three Islands lying before it, which make it an extraordinary good Harbour. The Eastermost of those three is *Golden Island*,<sup>3</sup> a small one, with a fair deep Channel between it and the Main. It is rocky and steep all round to the Sea, (and thereby naturally fortified) except only the Landing-place, which is a small Sandy Bay on the South side, towards the Harbour, from whence it gently rises. It is moderately high, and cover'd with small Trees or Shrubs. The Land of the *Isthmus* opposite to it, to the South East, is excellent fruitful Land, of a black Mold, with Sand intermix'd; and is pretty level for 4 or 5 Mile, till you come to the foot of the Hills. At this Place we landed at our going into the South Seas with Capt. *Sharp*. I have been ashore at this *Golden Island*, and was lying in the Harbour near it for about a Fortnight together, before I went into the South Seas. Near the Eastern Point of the

<sup>1</sup> Tiburón.

<sup>2</sup> A few years afterwards, the scene of the unfortunate attempt at settlement by the Scots, and named by them the Bay of Caledonia.

<sup>3</sup> Golden Island, the Spaniards' *Isla de Oro*, or *Santa Catalina*, most easterly of the long string of islands bordering the *Darien* coast. Its natural advantages attracted strangers for many centuries. Drake was here, a century before Wafer's day; it was a favourite rendezvous for the buccaneers of the seventeenth century; and between here and the main the first vessels of the Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies anchored in 1698.

Bay, which is not above three or four Furlongs distant from *Golden Island*, there is a Rivulet of very good Water.<sup>1</sup>

West of *Golden Island* lies the biggest of the three that face the Bay; it is, as a large low swampy Island, so beset with Mangroves, that it is difficult to go ashore; nor did any of us care to attempt it, having no business in such bad Ground. It lies very near a Point of the *Isthmus*, which is such a sort of Ground too, for a Mile or two further Westward; and such also is the Ground on the other side, quite into the Cod of the Bay. This Island is scarce parted from the *Isthmus* but at High-water; and even then Ships cannot pass between.<sup>2</sup>

The Island of *Pines*<sup>3</sup> is a small Island to the North of the other two, making a kind of Triangle with them. It rises in two Hills, and is a very remarkable Land off at Sea. It is cover'd all over with good tall Trees, fit for any use; and has a fine Rivulet of fresh Water. The North of it is Rocky, as is the opposite Shore of the *Isthmus*. On the South side you go ashore on the Island at a curious Sand-bay, inclosed between two Points like a Half-moon; and there is very good Riding. You may sail quite round the Island of *Pines*; but to go to *Golden Island* Harbour, you must enter by the East-end of *Golden Islands*, between that and the Main; for there is no passing between it and the great low Island.

From these Islands, and the low swampy Point opposite to them, the Shore runs North Westerly to Point Sanballas; and for the first 3 Leagues 'tis guarded with a Riffe of Rocks, some above, and some under Water, where a Boat cannot go ashore. The Rocks lie scatter'd unequally in breadth, for a Mile in some Places, in others two from the Shore. At the North West end of these Rocks, is a fine little Sandy Bay, with good anchoring

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this is the stream to which the Scots gave the name of Caledonia.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the island now called Sasardi.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Isla de Pinos', where the buccaneers often watered and cut timber, is used now by certain of the San Blas clans as a burial ground. Drake, after attacking Nombre de Dios in 1572, rowed his pinnaces first to the Bastimentos, and then to the Island of Pines, where his ships lay hidden; he had trained his men for the raid amongst islands 'de Cativas', 25 leagues from Nombre de Dios, and afterwards moved farther east. Dr. Loarte, reporting to Spain from Panama a little later, reports that Spanish vessels found a pirate ship 'on the Acla coast in the harbour of Pinos'.



and going ashore, as is reported by several Privateers, and the end of the Rocks on the one side, and some of the *Sambaloes* Islands (the Range of which begins from hence) on the other side, guard it from the Sea, and make it a very good Harbour. This, as well as the rest, is much frequented by Privateers; and is by those of our Country call'd *Tickle me quickly* Harbour.<sup>1</sup>

All along from hence to Point *Sanballas*, ly the *Samballoe's* Islands, a great multitude of them scattering in a Row, and collaterally too, at very unequal Distances, some of one, some two, or two Mile and an half, from the Shore, and from one another; which, with the adjacent Shore, its Hills and perpetual Woods, make a lovely landschape off at Sea. There are a great many more of these Islands than could well be represented in the Map; some of them also being very small.<sup>2</sup> They seem to lie parcell'd out in Clusters, as it were; between which, generally, there are Navigable Channels, by which you may enter within them; and the Sea between the whole Range and the *Isthmus* is Navigable from end to end, and affords every where good anchoring, in hard Sandy Ground, and good Landing on the Islands and Main. In this long Channel, on the Inside of some or other of those little Keys or Islands, be the Winds how they will, you never fail of a good Place for any number of Ships to ride at; so that this was the greatest Rendezvous of the Privateers on this Coast; but chiefly *La Sound's* Key, or *Springer's* Key, especially if they stay'd any time here; as well because these two Islands afford a good Shelter for Careening, as because they yield Wells of fresh Water upon digging, which few of the rest do.<sup>3</sup> The *Sambaloe's* are generally low, flat,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps in the curve just north of Punta de Mosquitos.

<sup>2</sup> Many changes have probably occurred in the reefs and islands off this coast since Wafer wrote; Gassó refers to the subsidence of an island in the early part of this century, and the consequent dispersal of the inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> No success has attended attempts to identify exactly the Key named after the French buccaneer 'La Sound' (sometimes called Lessone) and the neighbouring Springer's Key; but it seems likely that Gassó's 'San José de Nargana', and Nusatupu, nearby, both comparatively large and now having 60 or 70 houses each, are the islands in question. It is often impossible to identify the rivers and sites of settlements, named by the Spaniards of the sixteenth century; or to reconcile these with the names given by the

sandy Islands, cover'd with variety of Trees; especially with Mammees, Sapadilloes, and Manchineel, &c. beside the Shell-fish, and other Refreshments they afford the Privateers. The outermost Keys toward the main Sea, are rocky on that side (and are called the Riffe Keys); tho' their opposite Sides are Sandy, as the innermost Keys or Islands are. And there is a Ridge also of Rocks lying off at Sea on the outside, which appear above Water at some half a Mile distance, and extend in length as far as *La Sounds* Key, if not further; and even the Sea between, and the Shore of the *Sambaloes* it self on that side, is all rocky.

The long Channel between the *Sambaloes* and the *Isthmus* is of two, three, and four Miles breadth; and the Shore of the *Isthmus* is partly Sandy Bays, and partly Mangrove Land, quite to Point *Sanballas*. The Mountains are much at the same distance of 6 or 7 Miles from the Shore; but about the River of *Conception*, which comes out about a Mile or two to the Eastward of *La Sound's* Key, the main Ridge is somewhat further distant. Many little Brooks fall into the Sea on either side of that River, and the Outlets are some of them into the Sandy Bay, and some of them among the Mangrove Land; the Swamps of which Mangroves are (on this Coast) made by the Salt Water, so that the Brooks which come out there are brackish; but those in the Sandy Bay yield very sweet Water. None of those Outlets, not the River of *Conception* it self, are deep enough to admit any Vessel but Canoas, the Rivers on this part of the Coast being numerous but shallow; but the fine Riding in the Channel makes any other Harbour needless. I have been up and down most parts of it, and upon many of the Islands, and there the going ashore is always easy. But a Sea-wind makes a great Sea sometimes fall in upon the *Isthmus*, especially where a Channel opens between the Islands; so that I have been overset in a Canoa going ashore in one River, and in putting off to Sea from another. The Ground hereabouts is an excellent Soil within Land, rising up gently to the main Ridge, and is a continued Forest of stately Timber-Trees.

buccaneers, or with the modern names given by the Cuna Indians or the modern authorities of Panama Republic. The examination of old charts and maps and comparison of descriptions still leaves doubtful points.

Point *Sanballas* is a Rocky Point, pretty long and low, and is also so guarded with Rocks for a Mile off at Sea, that it is dangerous coming near it. From hence the Shore runs West, and a little Northerly, quite to *Portobel*.<sup>1</sup> About three Leagues

<sup>1</sup> Porto Bello: found and named by Columbus during his fourth and last voyage, on 2 November, 1502. The town of 'San Felipe de Puerto Bello' was officially established as the Atlantic terminus of the transisthmian highway (with Old, and afterwards New, Panama City at the Pacific side, and Venta de Cruces as a half-way house on the road) in 1596, by Alonso de Sotomayor. Nombre de Dios was then definitely abandoned. Its precarious position had been displayed by Drake's first raid of 1572; while the unsheltered condition of the harbour, subject to ruinous storms, added to frequent attacks by Indians and by the bands of escaped Negroes and their descendants (Cimarones) led to the gradual transference to the more westerly inlet of Porto Bello. Drake's new appearance on the coast in 1596 hastened the final removal.

As regards health the new site was not much better than the first; Gage, in Porto Bello in 1637, called it 'an open grave'. In spite of the good work done by the big hospital of San Juan de Dios, there were some 500 deaths every year when the galleons came from Spain to the annual Fair, of merchants, soldiers, and marines. Jeffreys, Geographer to His Majesty, wrote in 1762 of the port:

'As the forest almost borders on the town the tigers often make incursions into the streets, during the night, carrying off fowls, dogs, and domestic animals; even children have fallen prey to these ravenous creatures.' Serpents and toads are so numerous that after rain the streets are 'paved' with them. Nothing is more dismal than the toads' croaking throughout the night and monkeys howling from the forests. The climate is bad, owing to rain, sun, and constant miasmas; there are many lightning storms. Sailors all drink incessantly 'to recruit their spirits'.

Porto Bello was taken by the buccaneer Captain William Parker in 1601, soon after the building of San Jeronimo fort; by Henry Morgan, 1668; Sharp and Coxon, 1679: but, defended by magnificent fortresses and a necessary point of embarkation for the treasures of Peru, Panama, and Ecuador, was always rehabilitated.

By the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, the English South Sea Company was admitted to recognized trading with the Spanish Main. One commercial vessel, of 500 tons burden, was allowed by Spain to attend the annual Fair of Porto Bello, and a Factor was permitted to reside permanently on the Isthmus. Cockburn, in 1731, speaks of the magnificence and popularity of the English Factors, who aided him when destitute and gave him a passage from Porto Bello to Jamaica in one of the Company's snows. But in 1739 war had again broken out, and in that year Admiral Vernon attacked and took Porto Bello.

In 1819, during the wars of independence in Spanish America, the port

Westward from this Point lies Port *Scrivan*.<sup>1</sup> The Coast between them is all Rocky, and the Country within Land all Woody, as in other Parts.

Port *Scrivan* is a good Harbour, when you are got into it; but the Entrance of it, which is scarce a Furlong over, is so beset with Rocks on each side, but especially to the East, that it is very dangerous going in. Nor doth there seem to be a depth of Water sufficient to admit Vessels of any Bulk, there being in most Places but eight or nine Foot Water. The Inside of the Harbour goes pretty deep within the Land; and as there is good Riding, in a Sandy bottom, especially at the Cod of it, which is also fruitful Land, and has good fresh Water, so there is good Landing too on the East and South, where the Country is low for two or three Miles, and very firm Land; but the West-side is a Swamp of Red Mangroves. It was here at this Swamp, as bad a Passage as it is, that Capt. *Coxon*, *La Sound*, and the other Privateers landed in the Year, 1678. when they went to take *Portobel*. They had by this means a very tedious and wearisome March; but they chose to land at this distance from the Town, rather than at the *Bastimento's* or any nearer Place, that they might avoid being discover'd by the Scouts which the *Spaniards* always keep in their Neighbourhood, and so might surprize them. And they did, indeed, by this means avoid being discern'd, till they came within an Hours march of the Town; tho' they travelled along the Country for five or six Days. The *Spaniards* make no use of this Port *Scrivan*; and unless a Privateer, or a rambling Sloop put in here by chance, no Vessel visits it in many Years.<sup>2</sup>

was taken by Colonel Sir Gregor MacGregor, with 417 British who with him had fought as volunteers beside the patriot armies of Venezuela and Colombia, under Bolivar. But the isthmus of Panama was still a Spanish stronghold. Spanish troops drove out MacGregor; and while many of his little force were shot in the woods, others were taken to Panama for punishment. Only thirty survived, and were released, after independence.

<sup>1</sup> Puerto del Escribano ('of the Writer'): apparently identical with Columbus' 'Retrete', a narrow harbour where he sheltered in 1502.

<sup>2</sup> Between Port Escribano and Portobello the country is broken, with low hills, intersected by valleys and little streams; but the main mountain ridge is withdrawn and lowered; no high mountains are visible from Portobello. This flattening of the Isthmian range made possible the Spanish road from sea to sea.

From Port *Scrivan* to the Place where stood formerly the City of *Nombre de Dios*,<sup>1</sup> 'tis further Westward about 7 or 8 Leagues. The Land between is very uneven, with small Hills, steep against the Sea; the Valleys between them water'd with sorry little Rivers. The Soil of the Hills is Rocky, producing but small shrubby Trees; the Valleys are some of good Land, some of swamps and Mangroves. The main Ridge here seems to lie at a good distance from the Sea; for it was not discernible in this March of the Privateers along the Shore to *Portobel*. The Place where *Nombre de Dios* stood is the bottom of a Bay, close by the Sea, all overgrown with a sort of Wild-Canes, like those us'd by our Anglers in *England*. There is no Sign of a Town remaining, it is all so over-run with these Canes. The Situation of it seems to have been but very indifferent, the Bay before it lying open to the Sea, and affording little Shelter for Shipping; which I have heard was one Reason why the *Spaniards* forsook it. And another, probably, was the Unhealthiness of the Country it self, it being such low swampy Land, and very sickly; yet there is a little Rivulet of very sweet Water which runs close by the East-side of the Town. The Mouth of the Harbour is very wide; and tho' I have heard that there lie before it two or three little Keys, or Rocks, yet they afforded no great Security to it. So that the *Spaniards* were certainly much in the right, for quitting this Place to settle at *Portobel*; which tho' it be also an unhealthy Place, yet has it the advantage of a very good and defensible Harbour.

About a Mile or two to the Westward of these small Islands, at the Mouth of the Bay of *Nombre de Dios*, and about half a Mile or more from the Shore, lie a few Islands called the

<sup>1</sup> *Nombre de Dios*, founded by Nicuesa in 1510, was settled and established as the northern end of a road across Panama after 1519, when 'Pedrarias' transferred the chief colonists from Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien to the Pacific, and founded the first Panama City. *Nombre de Dios* proved to be extremely unhealthy, and a poor harbour, inadequately sheltered. An entire Spanish fleet, commanded by Aguayo, was lost here in 1565. Both Indians and buccaneers attacked the open town, and Drake's raid of 1572 emphasized the lack of defensibility. It was finally abandoned as the official end of the highway in 1597. Since Wafer's day the port has recovered a sparse population, chiefly of Negroes, whose main occupation is trading with the San Blas Indians.

*Bastimento's*, for the most part pretty high, and one peaked, and all cloathed with Woods. On one of them, (part of which also was a Sandy Bay, and a good Riding and Landing-place) there is a Spring of very good Water. I was ashore at this Island, and up and down among the rest of them; and all of them together make a very good Harbour between them and the *Isthmus*. The Bottom affords good Anchoring; and there is good coming in with the Sea-wind between the Eastermost Island and the next to it, and going out with the Land-wind the same way, this being the chief Passage. Further West, before you come to *Portobel*, lie two small Islands, flat and without Wood or Water. They are pretty close together; and one of them I have been ashore upon. The Soil is sandy, and they are environ'd with Rocks towards the Sea; and they lie so near the *Isthmus* that there is but a very narrow Channel between, not fit for Ships to come into.

The shore of the *Isthmus* hereabouts consists mostly of Sandy Bays, after you are past a Ridge of Rocks that run out from the Bay of *Nombre de Dios*, pointing towards the *Bastimento's*. Beyond the *Bastimento's* to *Portobel*, the Coast is generally Rocky. Within Land the Country is full of high and steep Hills, very good Land; most Woody, unless where clear'd for Plantations by *Spanish Indians*, tributary to *Portobel*, whither they go to Church. And these are the first Settlements on this Coast under the *Spanish* Government, and lie scattering in lone Houses or little Villages, from hence to *Portobel* and beyond; with some Look-outs or Watches kept towards the Sea, for the Safety of the Town. In all the rest of the North side of the *Isthmus*, which I have describ'd hitherto, the *Spaniards* had neither Command over the *Indians*, nor Commerce with them while I was there, though there are *Indians* inhabiting all along the Continent; yet one has told me since, that the *Spaniards* have won them over to them.<sup>1</sup>

*Portobel* is a very fair, large and commodious Harbour, affording good Anchoring and good Shelter for Ships, having

<sup>1</sup> Acosta, in his *Compendio Historico del Descubrimiento*, relates the story of Bishop Piedrahita's efforts to conciliate the native folk of Darien; missionaries were sent out to convert and baptise, but were chiefly successful among the Chocó, on the Pacific slope. See Note 2, on page 6.

a narrow Mouth, and spreading wider within. The Galleons from *Spain* find good Riding here during the time of their Business at *Portobel*; for from hence they take in such of the Treasures of *Peru* as are brought thither over Land from *Panama*. The Entrance of this Harbour is secur'd by a Fort upon the left Hand going in;<sup>1</sup> it is a very strong one, and the Passage is made more secure by a Block-house on the other side, opposite to it. At the bottom of the Harbour lies the Town, bending along the Shore like a Half-moon, in the middle of which upon the Sea is another small low Fort, environ'd with Houses except only to the Sea. And at the West end of the Town, about a Furlong from the Shore, upon a gentle Rising, lies another Fort, pretty large and very strong, yet overlook'd by a Neighbouring Hill further up the Country, which Sir *Henry Morgan* made use of to take the Fort.<sup>2</sup> In all these Forts there may be about 2 or 300 *Spanish* Souldiers in Garison. The Town is long and narrow, having two principal Streets besides those that go across; with a small Parade about the middle of it, surrounded with pretty fair Houses. The other Houses also and Churches are pretty handsome, after the *Spanish* make. The Town lies open to the Country without either Wall or Works; and at the East-side of it, where the Road to *Panama* goes out, (because of Hills, that lie to the Southward of the Town, and obstruct the direct Passage) there lies a long Stable, running North and South from the Town, to which it joins.<sup>3</sup> This is the King's Stable for the Mules that are imployed in the Road betwixt this and *Panama*. The Governours House is close by the great Fort, on the same Rising, at the West of the Town. Between the Parade in the middle of the Town, and the Governours House, is a little Creek or Brook, with a Bridge over it; and at the East-end, by the Stable, is a small Rivulet of fresh Water. I have already said that it is an unhealthy Place. The East-side is low and swampy; and the Sea at low Water

<sup>1</sup> 'San Felipe de Todo Fierro', the celebrated 'Iron Fort'.

<sup>2</sup> In 1668. Morgan held a commission from Sir Thomas Modyford, Governor of Jamaica, to effect reprisals for Spanish attacks.

<sup>3</sup> In this direction was the 'Guinea' quarter, where the Negroes lived; another mestizo section was 'Triana', named after the famous gipsy district of Seville.

leaves the Shore within the Harbour bare, a great way from the Houses; which having a black filthy Mud, it stinks very much, and breeds noisome Vapours, thro' the Heat of the Climate.<sup>1</sup> From the South and the East-sides the Country rises gently in Hills, which are partly Woodland and partly Savannah; but there is not any great Store either of Fruit-trees or Plantations near the Town. This Account I have had from several Privateers just as they return'd from *Portobel*; but I have not been there my self.

The Country beyond this Westward, to the Mouth of the River *Chagre*, I have seen off at Sea. But not having been ashore there, I can give no other Account of it, but only that it is partly Hilly, and near the Sea very much Swampy; and I have heard by several that there is no Communication between *Portobel* and the Mouth of that River.

I have been yet further Westward on this Coast, before I went over the *Isthmus* with Capt. *Sharp*, ranging up and down and careening at *Bocca Toro* and *Bocca Drago*,<sup>2</sup> but this is without the Verge of those Bounds I have set my self.

Having thus Survey'd the North-Coast of the *Isthmus*, I shall take a light View of the South also. But I shall the less need to be particular in it, because Mr. *Dampier* hath in some measure describ'd this part of it in his *Voyage round the World*.

To begin therefore from Point *Garachina*,<sup>3</sup> which makes the West-side of the Mouth of the River of *Sambo*,<sup>4</sup> this Point is pretty high fast Land; but within, towards the River, it is low, drowned Mangrove, and so are all the Points of Land to Cape Saint *Lorenzo*.

The River of *Sambo* I have not seen; but it is said to be a pretty large River. Its Mouth opens to the North; and from thence the Coast bears North East to the Gulph of St. *Michael*. This Gulph is made by the Outlets of several Rivers, the most noted of which are the River of *Santa Maria*, and the River of

<sup>1</sup> Captam Ulloa, making his secret report to Spain on his journey of 1735 remarked that the Porto Bello climate 'destroys the vigour of nature'.

<sup>2</sup> Boca del Toro and Boca del Drago, i.e. Mouth of the Bull and Mouth of the Dragon, the two entrances to Almirante Bay, on the coast north-west of the Chagre river; near the boundary of Costa Rica.

<sup>3</sup> Garachiné.

<sup>4</sup> Or Sambú.



*Congo*; tho' there are others of a considerable bigness. Of these Rivers, to the Southward of *Santa Maria*, one is called the *Gold River*,<sup>1</sup> affording Gold Dust in great plenty, for hither the *Spaniards* of *Panama* and *Santa Maria Town* bring up their Slaves to gather up the Gold Dust.

The next to the *Gold River* is that of *Santa Maria*, so called from the Town of that Name seated on the South-side of it, at a good distance from the Sea. It was along this River we came, when we first entred the South Seas with Captain *Sharp*,<sup>2</sup> standing over it, from the Bay by *Golden Island*, where we landed. We then took the Town of *Santa Maria* in our way; which was garrison'd with about 200 *Spanish Soldiers*, but was not very strong, having no Walls; and the Fort it self was secur'd with Stockadoes only, or Palisadoes. This is but a new Town, being built by the *Spaniards* of *Panama*, partly for a Garison and Magazine of Provision, and partly for Quarters of Refreshment, and a retiring Place for their Workmen in the *Gold River*.<sup>3</sup> The Country all about here is Woody and Low, and very unhealthy; the Rivers being so Oazy, that the stinking Mud infects the Air. But the little Village of *Scuchadero*,<sup>4</sup> which lies on the right side of the River of *Santa Maria*, near the Mouth of it, is seated on fast rising Ground, open to the Gulph of *St. Michael*, and admitting fresh Breezes from the Sea; so that this is pretty healthy, and serves as a Place of Refreshment for the Mines; and has a fine Rivulet of very sweet Water; whereas those Rivers are brackish for a considerable way up the Country.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Tucuti; but perhaps, as Vicente Restrepo suggests, the Cana.

<sup>2</sup> The buccaneers had descended the Chucunaque to its junction with the Tuira or Sta. Maria. An account of the taking of Santa Maria fort, in the *Voyages and Adventures of Captain Bartholomew Sharp*, published in 1684 with a preface by P. Ayres, remarks that 'having no Chymist to refine the Ore, we thought it best to go look for it where it was to be had with the King of Spain's Arms on it, for we like other children loved pictures strangely'.

<sup>3</sup> The wonderfully rich gold mines of Santa Cruz de Cana had been discovered in 1680, only a short time before the buccaneers' raid. Ariza says that in the year 1708 the king's 'fifths' from the Cana mines amounted to 820 *libras* of fine gold.

<sup>4</sup> Sp. 'Escuchadero', i.e. sentry, or listening-post.

<sup>5</sup> The inlet of the Savana river is so extended and shallow that the point of tide-ending lies almost half-way across the Isthmus.

Between *Scuchadero* and Cape St. *Lorenzo*, which makes the North-side of the Gulph of St. *Michael*, the River of *Congo* falls into the Gulph; which River is made up of many Rivulets, that fall from the Neighbouring Hills, and join into one Stream. The Mouth of it is muddy and bare for a great way at low Water, unless just in the depth of the Channel; and it affords little Entertainment for Shipping. But further in, the River is deep enough; so that Ships coming at high Water might find it a very good Harbour, if they had any Business here. The Gulph it self has several Islands in it; and up and down in and about them, there is in many Places very good Riding; for the most part in Oazy Ground. The Islands also, especially those towards the Mouth, make a good Shelter; and the Gulph hath room enough for a multitude of Ships. The Sides are every where surrounded with Mangroves, growing in wet swampy Land.

North of this Gulph is a small Creek, where we landed at our Return out of the Seas; and the Land between these is partly such Mangrove Land as the other, and partly Sandy Bays. From thence the Land runs further on North, but gently bending to the West. And this Coast also is much such a mixture of Mangrove Land and Sandy Bay, quite to the River *Cheapo*; and in many Places there are Sholes, for a Mile or half a Mile off at Sea. In several parts of this Coast, at about five or six Miles distance from the Shore there are small Hills; and the whole Country is covered with Woods. I know but one River worth observing between *Congo* and *Cheapo*. Yet there are many Creeks and Outlets; but no fresh Water, that I know of, in any part of this Coast, in the dry Season; for the Stagnancies and Declivities of the Ground, and the very droppings of the Trees, in the wet Season, afford Water enough.

*Cheapo* is a considerable River, but has no good entring into it for Sholes. Its Course is long, rising near the North Sea, and pretty far from towards the East. About this River the Country something changes its Face, being Savannah on the West-side; though the East-side is Woodland, as the other. *Cheapo* Town stands on the West-side, at some distance from the Sea; but is small, and of no great Consequence. Its chief Support is from the Pasturage of black Cattle in the Savannah's.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Father Vázquez de Espinosa says that in the early part of the seventeenth

These Savannah's are not level, but consist of small Hills and Valleys, with fine Spots of Woods intermix'd; and from some of these Hills not far from *Cheapo*, the River of *Chagre*, which runs into the North Sea, takes its rise. It runs West for a while; and on the South-side of it, at no great distance from *Panama*, is *Venta de Cruces*,<sup>1</sup> a small Village of Inns and Store-houses; whither Merchandises that are to be sent down the River *Chagre* are carried from *Panama* by Mules, and there embark'd in Canoa's and Pereagoe's; but the Plate is carried all the way by Land on Mules to *Portobel*. The Country here also is Savannah and Woodland intermix'd; with thick short Hills, especially towards *Panama*.

Between the River of *Cheapo* and *Panama*, further West, are three Rivers, of no great Consequence, lying open to the Sea. The Land between is low even Land, most of it dry, and cover'd here and there by the Sea, with short Bushes. Near the most Westerly of these Old *Panama* was seated, once a large City; but nothing now remains of it, besides Rubbish, and a few Houses of poor People. The *Spaniards* were weary of it, having no good Port or Landing-place; and had a design to have left it, before it was burnt by Sir *Henry Morgan*.<sup>2</sup> But then they no

century there were flourishing sugar-plantations, and sugar and saw mills near Chepo. Timber was sent to Lima for ship-building.

<sup>1</sup> *Venta de Cruces*, one day's ride from *Panama City*, was the most important of the stopping-places on the transisthmian route maintained by the *Panama* authorities. The old village stands some 130 ft. above sea-level, is cooler than *Panama City*, and was used as a hospital-station as well as having customs and warehouses. In dry weather, mule-trains went across on the cobbled path between *Panama* and *Porto Bello*; in the 8 or 9 months of wet weather, when the *Chagre* was high, cargo went by boat from *Venta de Cruces*, down-river, past fort *San Lorenzo*, to the Pacific, vessels thence hugging the shore eastward to *Porto Bello*.

Practically the entire site of *Venta de Cruces* has been drowned by the creation of new reservoirs to serve canal purposes.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of the 1684 account of Sharp's Voyages, edited by P. Ayres, is the English translation of a Report written to Spain by Don Juan Perez de Guzman, President of the Audiencia of *Panama*, giving his account of Morgan's raid. It is stated to have been intercepted by an English vessel. Don Juan Perez is quoted as saying: 'I endeavoured with all my industry to persuade the [Spanish] soldiers to turn and face our enemies, but it was impossible; so that nothing hindering them, they entered the city, to which the slaves and owners of the houses had set fire, and being all of boards and

longer deliberated about the Matter; but instead of rebuilding it, raised another Town to the Westward, which is the present City of *Panama*. The River of Old *Panama* runs between them; but rather nearer the new Town than the Old; and into this River small Barks may enter.

The chief Advantage which New *Panama* hath above the *Old*, is an excellent Road for small Ships, as good as a Harbour; for which it is beholden to the Shelter of the Neighbouring Isles of *Perica*, which lie before it, three in number, in a Row parallel to the Shore.<sup>1</sup> There is very good Anchoring between, at a good distance from the Town; but between the Road and the Town is a Shole or Spit of Land; so that Ships cannot come near the Town, but lie nearest to *Perica*; but by this means the Town has them less under Command. *Panama* stands on a level Ground, and is surrounded with a high Wall, especially towards the Sea. It hath no Fort besides the Town-Walls; upon which the Sea, which washes it every Tide, beats so strongly, sometimes, as to throw down a part of them. It makes a very beautiful Prospect off at Sea, the Churches and chief Houses appearing above the rest. The Building appears white; especially the Walls, which are of Stone; and the Covering of the Houses red, for probably they are Pan-tile, which is much used by the *Spaniards* all over the *West-Indies*. The Town is surrounded with Savannahs, gentle flat Hills, and Copses of Wood, which add much to the Beauty of the Prospect; and among these are scatter'd here and there some *Estantion's* or Farm-houses for the managing their Cattel; which are Beeves, Horses and Mules. This Town is the great Rendezvous of this part of the South-sea Coast; being the Receptacle of the Treasures from *Lima*, and other Sea-ports of *Peru*; trading also towards *Mexico*, though very little beyond the Gulph of *Nicaragua*. The King of *Spain* hath a President here, who acts timber, most of it was quickly burnt, except the Audiencia, the Governor's house, the Convent of the Mercedes, San José, the suburbs of Malambo and Pierde Vidas; at which they say the enemy fretted very much, being disappointed of their plunder.'

<sup>1</sup> The three islands of Perico, Flamenco and Naos have now been incorporated in an embankment running out from the shore, created to protect the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal, west of Panama City.

in Concert with his Council;<sup>1</sup> and the Governour of *Portobel* is under him. His Jurisdiction comprehends *Nata*, *Lavelia*, *Leon*, *Realeja*,<sup>2</sup> &c. till he meets with the Government of *Guatimala*; and Eastward he commands over as much of the *Isthmus*, on both Seas, as is under the *Spaniards*. The Place is very sickly, though it lies in a Country good enough; but possibly 'tis only so to those who come hither from the dry pure Air of *Lima* and *Truxillio*,<sup>3</sup> and other Parts of *Peru*; who grow indispos'd presently, and are forc'd to cut off their Hair. Yet is it very healthy in comparison of *Portobel*.

About a League to the West of *Panama* is another River, which is pretty large, and is called by some *Rio Grande*.<sup>4</sup> It is Shole at entrance, and runs very swift; and so is not fit for Shipping. On the West-banks of it are *Estantion's* and Plantations of Sugar; but the Shore from hence beginning to trend away to the *Southward* again, I shall here fix my Western Boundary to the South-sea Coast of the *Isthmus*, and go no further in the Description of it.

The Shore between Point *Garachina* and this River, and so on further to *Punta Mala*,<sup>5</sup> makes a very regular and more than Semi-circular Bay, called by the name of the Bay of *Panama*. In this are several as fine Islands as are any where to be found, the *King's* or *Pearl Islands*, *Pacheque*, *Chepelio*, *Perica*,<sup>6</sup> &c. with great variety of good Riding for Ships: of all which Mr. *Dampier* hath given a particular Account in the 7th Chapter of his *Voyage round the World*; so that I shall forbear to say any thing more of them. 'Tis a very noble delightful Bay; and as it affords good anchoring and shelter, so the Islands also yield plenty of Wood, Water, Fruits, Fowls and Hogs, for the accommodation of Shipping.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Royal Audiencia was first established in Panama in 1538.

<sup>2</sup> Nata and La Villa (now Los Santos), in Panama, west of the capital; León, chief town of Nicaragua; Realejo, then the port for León, on the Pacific. Corinto, in modern times, has superseded Realejo.

<sup>3</sup> Trujillo, on the 'rainless coast' of Peru.

<sup>4</sup> The valley of the Rio Grande was chosen by the French, and later by American, engineers for the Pacific entrance of the Canal. <sup>5</sup> Chamé.

<sup>6</sup> Pacheca; Chepillo ('little Chepo', opposite the mouth of the Chepo river); Perico.

<sup>7</sup> Wafer, with the buccaneer fleet, had had pleasant experience of the

The Soil of the Inland part of the Country is generally very good, for the most part, of a black fruitful Mould. From the Gulph of St. *Michael*, to the Ridge of Hills lying off *Caret Bay*, it is a Vale Country, well water'd with the Rivers that fall into that Gulph. But near the Gulph 'tis very Swampy and broken, so as that it is scarce possible to travel along the Shore thereabouts. Westward of the River of *Congo*, the Country grows more Hilly and Dry, with pleasant and rich Vales intermix'd, till you are past the River *Cheapo*; and thus far the whole Country is all, as it were, one continued Wood. The Savannah Country commences here, dry and grassy, with small Hills and Woods intermix'd, and the Hills are every where fertile to the top (tho' more fruitful nearer the bottom) and even the tops of the main Ridge are cover'd with very flourishing Trees. Yet the Hills from which the Gold Rivers fall, near *Santa Maria*, are more barren towards the top, and bear short Shrubs scatter'd here and there. The Soil seems capable of any Productions proper to the Climate. I believe we have nothing that grows in *Jamaica* but what would thrive here also; and grow very luxuriantly, considering the exceeding richness of the Soil.

The Woods of this Country are not the same on the tops or sides of the Hills in the Inland Country, as they are near the Sea. For in the drier and more rising Inland Country, the Woods are rather a large Forest of Timber-trees, or a Delightful Grove of Trees of several kinds, very large and tall, with little or no Underwood, and the Trees are plac'd at such a distance from each other, as that a Horse might gallop among them for a great way, and decline them with ease.<sup>1</sup> The tops of these Trees fruitfulness of the islands in the Bay, between 1680 and 1687. The Pearl Islands (with the *Isla del Rey* as the largest, 15 miles from N. to S.) were thickly inhabited at the time of the Spanish Conquest; but the natives had been rapidly exterminated, and were replaced by groups of slaves. Pearl fishing is still successfully carried on by Chinese traders employing, usually, Negro divers.

<sup>1</sup> Among the most noble of these characteristic large trees of Panama's virgin forest is the 'Panama tree' (*Sterculia apetala*), tall and buttressed; the beautiful 'Cuipo' (*Cavanillesia platanifolia*), with smooth, pale trunk rising 120 ft., its branches covered in spring with deep rose-coloured flowers, the 'Espave' (*Anacardium excelsum*), tossing enormous plumes of white flowers almost to the ground in March and April; the ceiba (*Bombax barrigón*), one of several 'cotton' trees: a massive *Ficus*, with dense masses of shining green

are generally very large and spreading; and I presume 'tis the shade and dropping of these which hinders anything else from growing in the rich Ground among them. For in the open Savannahs, or where the Ground is clear'd by Industry for Plantations, there grow smaller Vegetables in great abundance. But on the Sea-Coast, where the Soil is often swampy drown'd Land, especially near the Mouths of Rivers, the Trees are not tall but shrubby, as Mangroves, Brambles, Bamboe's, &c. Not growing in the manner of Groves or Arbours, scattering at convenient distances; but in a continued Thicket, so close set, that 'tis a very difficult matter to work ones way through these Morasses.

The Weather is much the same here as in other places of the Torrid Zone in this Latitude; but inclining rather to the Wet Extreme. The Season of Rains begins in *April* or *May*; and during the Months of *June*, *July* and *August*, the Rains are very violent. It is very hot also about this time, where-ever the Sun breaks out of a Cloud, for the Air is then very sultry, because then usually there are no Breezes to fan and cool it, but 'tis all glowing hot. About *September*, the Rains begin to abate. But 'tis *November* or *December*, and it may be, part of *January* e're they are quite gone, so that 'tis a very wet Country, and has Rains for Two Thirds, if not Three Quarters of a Year. Their first coming is after the manner of our suddain *April* Showers, or hasty Thunder Showers, one in a Day at first. After this, two or three in a Day; at length, a Shower almost every Hour, and frequently accompanied with violent Thunder and Lightning, during which time the Air has often a faint Sulphureous Smell, where pent up among the Woods. After this variable Weather, for about four or six Weeks, there will be settled continued Rains of several Days and Nights, without Thunder and Lightning, but exceeding vehement, considering the length of them. Yet at certain Intervals between these, even in the wettest of the Season, there will be several fair Days intermix'd, with only Tornado's or Thunder-Showers; and that sometimes for a Week together. These Thunder-Showers cause usually a sensible Wind, by the Clouds pressing the Atmosphere, which leaves creating cool shade, or the strange 'candle-tree' (*Parmentiera cereifera*), hanging with apple-scented, waxy fruits.

is very refreshing, and moderates the Heat. But then this Wind shaking the Trees of this continued Forest, their dropping is as troublesome as the Rain it self. When the Shower is over, you shall hear for a great way together the Croaking of Frogs and Toads, the humming of Moskito's or Gnats, and the hissing or shrieking of Snakes and other Insects, loud and unpleasant; some like the quacking of Ducks. The Moskito's chiefly infest the low swampy or Mangrove Lands, near the Rivers or Seas. But however, this Country is not so pester'd with that uneasie Vermin, as many other of the warm Countries are. When the Rains fall among the Woods, they make a hollow or ratling sound. But the Floods caus'd by them often bear down the Trees; as I observ'd in relating my Passage over Land. These will often Barricado or Dam up the River, till 'tis clear'd by another Flood that shall set the Trees afloat again. Sometimes also the Floods run over a broad Plain; and for the time, make it all like one great Lake. The coolest time here is about our Christmas, when the fair Weather is coming on.



## Of the Trees, Fruits, &c. in the Isthmus of America

As this Country is very Woody, so it contains great variety of Trees, of several Kinds unknown to us in *Europe*, as well Fruit-Trees as others.

The *Cotton-tree*<sup>1</sup> is the largest of any, and grows in great plenty in most parts of the *Isthmus*; but I do not remember that I have seen it in the *Samballoses*, or any other of the adjacent *Islands*. It bears a Cod about as big as a Nutmeg, full of short Wool or Down, which when ripe bursts out of the Cod, and is blown about by the Wind, and is of little use. The chief Advantage that is made of these Trees, is by forming them into Canoa's and Periago's; which last differ from the other, as Lighters and small Barges do from Wherries. The *Indians* burn the Trees hollow; but the *Spaniards* hew and chizzel them; and the Wood is very soft and easy to work upon, being softer than Willow.

The *Cedars* of this Country are valuable for their heighth and largeness; there are very stately ones on the Continent, but I remember not any in the *Islands*. They grow towards each of the *Sea Coasts*, but especially towards the North. The Wood is very red, of a curious fine Grain, and very fragrant.<sup>2</sup> But these are put to no better use than the *Cotton-trees*, serving only to make Canoa's and Periago's. And their plenty you may judge of by this, that if the *Indians* want to cut one for a Canoa, they will not trouble themselves about any a Furlong off, tho' never so fine; having enough usually to fell by the side of the River into which they intend to Launch it.

There are on the Continent several Trees of the *Palm-kind*, of which sort we may reckon the *Macaw-tree*.<sup>3</sup> It grows in great plenty in swampy or moist Grounds; and I remember not that I

<sup>1</sup> *Bombax barrigón* is the most striking of the cotton-bearing trees of the Isthmus.

<sup>2</sup> *Cedrela odorata*.

<sup>3</sup> See note on pp. 10–11. This palm has been identified as the 'grugru' of Trinidad, known botanically as *Acrocomia sclerocarpa*; yet Wafer's detailed description suggests *Guilielma utilis*, whose egg-shaped, scarlet fruit is greatly prized by the native tribes of Costa Rica, and called by them 'pejebaye'.

saw them any where but on the South-side of the *Isthmus*, which is mostly of such a Soil. It is not very tall, the Body rising streight up to about ten Foot or more, surrounded with protuberant Rings at certain distances, and those thick-set with long Prickles. The middle of the Tree is a Pith like Elder, taking up above half the Diameter of the Body. The Body is naked without Branches till towards the top; but there it puts out Leaves or Branches 12 or 14 Foot long, and a Foot and an half wide, lessening gradually toward the Extremity. The Rib or Seam of this Leaf is beset all along with Prickles, on the out-side; and the Leaf it self is jagged about the Edges and as thick as ones Hand, at the broader end of it. At the top of the Tree, and amidst the Roots of these Leaves grows the Fruit, a sort of Berries sprouting up in Clusters, each about the size of a small Pear, but many score of them together. They incline to an oval Figure, and are of a yellow or reddish Colour when ripe. There is a Stone in the middle, and the outside is stringy, and slimy when ripe; of a tart Tast, harsh in the Mouth, yet not unpleasant. And the way of eating the Fruit is to bite the Fleshy part from the Stone, and having chew'd it, to spit out the remaining stringy Substance. The *Indians* frequently cut down the Tree only to get the Berries; but such of them as are more low and slender, you may bend down to your Hand. The Wood of the Tree is very hard, black, and ponderous, and is of great use. It splits very easily, and the *Indians* make of it many Conveniencies for their Building and other Occasions, splitting the Tree into small Planks or Rafters which they use about their Houses. The Men make Arrow-heads of this Wood; the Women Needle-Shuttles to weave their Cotton, &c.

Upon the *Main* also grows the *Bibby* Tree, so called from a Liquor which distills from it, and which our *English* call *Bibby*.<sup>1</sup> The Tree hath a streight slender Body no thicker than ones Thigh, but grows to a great height, 60 or 70 Foot. The Body is naked of Leaves or Branches, but prickly. The Branches put out at the top, and among them grow the Berries abundantly, like a Garland round about the Root of each of the Branches. The Tree hath all along the inside of it a narrow Pith; the Wood

<sup>1</sup> Vicente Restrepo thinks that Wafer's 'Bibby' is the Spaniards' 'arbol de leche', *Galactodendron utile*.

is very hard, and black as Ink. The *Indians* do not cut, but burn down the Tree to get at the Berries. These are of a whitish Colour, and about the size of a Nutmeg. They are very Oily; and the *Indians* beat them in hollow Mortars or Troughs, then boil and strain them; and as the Liquor cools, they skim off a clear Oil from the top. This Oil is extraordinary bitter. The *Indians* use it for anointing themselves, and to mix with the Colours wherewith they paint themselves. When the Tree is young they Tap it, and put a Leaf into the Bore; from whence the *Bibby* trickles down in great quantity. It is a wheyish Liquor, of a pleasant tart Taste; and they drink it after it hath been kept a Day or two.

There are *Coco*-trees in the Islands,<sup>1</sup> but none on the *Isthmus* that I remember; and no *Cacao*-trees on either.<sup>2</sup>

On the *Main* grows a Tree that bears a Fruit like a Cherry; but full of Stones, and never soft.<sup>3</sup>

On the *Main* also are *Plantains* in great abundance, which have a Body consisting of several Leaves or Coats, that grow one from under another, spiring upwards into an oblong Fruit at the top; the Coats or Leaves, which are very long and large, spreading off from the Body, and making a Plume all round. None of them grow wild, unless when some are brought down the Rivers in the Season of the Rains, and being left aground, sow themselves. The *Indians* set them in Rows or Walks, without under-wood; and they make very delightful Groves. They cut them down to get at the Fruit; and the Bodies being green and sappy, they are cut down with one Stroke of an Axe.

The *Bonano's*<sup>4</sup> also grow on the *Isthmus* very plentifully.

<sup>1</sup> The coco-nut (*Cocos nucifera*), whose original home is either tropical America or the Pacific (a question not decided by botanists), was growing on the Pacific side of Mexico at the time of the Spanish Conquest (1520) according to Oviedo, but not on the Atlantic coast. A palm of such utility, readily propagated, was certain to spread rapidly with the advent of Europeans, and has long been cultivated in extensive groves all along the Carribean littoral. Sir Hans Sloane, writing of conditions in 1687, considered it an introduction into Jamaica.

<sup>2</sup> *Theobroma cacao*, cultivated in Mexico before the Conquest, and wild in North Brazil, may have been wild also in Darien; a little is now cultivated, and the aromatic seeds are a necessary part of many kinds of ceremonial magic.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, *Spondias lutea*, a 'plum' of agreeable flavour.

<sup>4</sup> Evidence seems to be against the American origin of the banana (*Musa*

They are a sort of *Plantains*. The Fruit is short and thick, sweet and mealy. This eats best raw, and the *Plantain* boil'd.

On the *Islands* there are a great many *Mammee*-trees, which grow with a clear, streight Body, to 60 Foot high, or upwards. The Fruit is very wholesome and delicious; shap'd somewhat like a Pound-pear, but much larger, with a small Stone or two in the middle.

The *Mammee-Sappota* differs something from the other, and is a smaller and firmer Fruit, of a fine beautiful Colour when ripe. It is very scarce on the *Islands*; and neither of these grow on the *Continent*.<sup>1</sup>

So neither are *Sapadillo*'s found growing on the *Isthmus*, though there is great plenty of them in the *Islands*. The Tree is not so high as those last; it grows without Branches to the top, where it spreads out in Limbs like an Oak. The Fruit is very pleasant to the Tast. It is small as a *Bergamasco* Pear, and is coated like a Russet-Pippin.

On the *Isthmus* grows that delicious Fruit which we call the *Pine-Apple*,<sup>2</sup> in shape not much unlike an Artichoke, and as big as a Mans Head. It grows like a Crown on the top of a Stalk about as big as ones Arm, and a Foot and a half high. The Fruit is ordinarily about six Pound weight; and is inclos'd with short prickly Leaves like an Artichoke. They do not strip, but pare

*sapientum*) and its cousin the plantain. The plant appears to have been introduced in the early sixteenth century, from Asia, by the Spanish and Portuguese discoverers. No wild variety has been found in the American tropics, and none of the early Spanish writers describe the plant. But, introduced, the banana spreads with such rapidity that its prevalence in Panama, 180 years after the conquest, is credible.

<sup>1</sup> A certain confusion exists between the mamey and the sapote: Wafer's 'Mammee-Sappota' is the true mamey, *Mammea americana*, the only species; the fruit is never plentiful, but delicious at its best, firm, apricot-coloured, fragrant, with one large, light-coloured stone. The commoner sapote (*Calocarpum Mammosum*) with sweet, insipid, reddish flesh, is not related to the true mamey, although called in Panama 'mamey de tierra'. It is the 'tzapote' of Mexico and the 'marmalade-tree' of Jamaica. Wafer's 'sapodillo' is *Achras zapota*, 'nispero' of Central America, 'naseberry' of Jamaica, 'chico sapote' of Mexico: extremely sweet agreeable fruit. This, or a closely allied tree, yields the *chicle*, or chewing-gum of commerce.

<sup>2</sup> *Bromelia Ananas*. Columbus was the first European to see and describe this best of all tropical fruits, on his first voyage.

off these Leaves to get at the Fruit; which hath no Stone or kernel in it. 'Tis very juicy; and some fancy it to resemble the Tast of all the most delicious Fruits one can imagine mix'd together. It ripens at all times of the Year, and is rais'd from new Plants. The Leaves of the Plant are broad, about a Foot long, and grow from the Root.

On the *Main* also grows the *Prickle Pear*,<sup>1</sup> which is a thick-leav'd Plant about four Foot high, full of Prickles all over. That which they call the Pear grows at the Extremity of the Leaf. It's a good Fruit, much eaten by the *Indians* and others.

There are *Popes Heads*, as we call them, on the *Main*. They are a Plant or Shrub growing like a Mole-hill, and full of Spurs a Span long, sharp, thick and hard, with a black Point. They make a very good Fence, galling the Feet and Legs of any who come among them.

They have *Sugar-Canes* on the *Isthmus*; but the *Indians* make no other use of them, than to chew them and suck out the Juice.

There is on the *Islands*, a Tree which is called *Manchinel*, and its Fruit the *Manchinel Apple*.<sup>2</sup> 'Tis in Smell and Colour like a lovely pleasant Apple, small and fragrant, but of a poisonous Nature; for if any eat of any Living Creature that has happen'd to feed on that Fruit, they are poisoned thereby, tho' perhaps not mortally. The Trees grow in green Spots; they are low, with a large Body, spreading out and full of Leaves. I have heard that the Wood hath been us'd in fine carv'd or inlay'd Works; for it is delicately grain'd. But there is danger in cutting it, the very sap being so poisonous, as to blister the part which any of the

<sup>1</sup> The 'prickly pear' interested early visitors to the American tropics because no species of the family had been seen previously by Europeans. It is an *Opuntia* (Cactus family) of the *elator* species: a true native, growing chiefly in dry regions. The cochineal insect was fed upon one Mexican and Central American variety: the fruit, sweetish and insipid, has the one chief virtue of remaining cool under a tropic sun.

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish 'manzanillo', or 'little apple' (*Hippomane mancinella*), forms thickets along the shores of Panama Bay, and is also frequent on the Caribbean coast of Central America. The sap has poisonous qualities, but does not affect all persons alike: the editor has frequently eaten, and seen others eat, the pleasantly acrid fruit, without ill effects. Authenticated cases are known, however, of animals suffering from masticating leaves or boughs, and of persons experiencing temporary injury to the eyes from the smoke of burning manzanillo wood.

Chips strike upon as they fly off. A French-man of our Company lying under one of these Trees, in one of the *Samballoes*, to refresh himself, the Rain-water trickling down thence on his Head and Breast, blistered him all over, as if he had been bestrewed with *Cantharides*. His Life was saved with much difficulty; and even when cured, there remained Scars, like those after the Small-Pox.

The *Maho* Tree, which grows here is about as big as an Ash.<sup>1</sup> Another sort of *Maho*, which is more common is smaller, and grows in moist swampy Places, by the sides of Rivers, or near the Sea. Its Bark is ragged like tattered Canvass; if you lay hold on a piece of it, 'twill rip off in Strings to the top of the Tree; the Strings are of a great length, slender, and very strong. Ropes are made of it for Cables, and Rigging for small Vessels. The way the *Indians* order it, is thus: they strip off the Bark in great flakes: out of them they draw greater or lesser Strings as they please. These they beat and clean, and twist into Threads and Cords, by rolling them between the Palm of the Hand, and the top of the Knee or Thigh, as our Shoemakers twist their Ends, but much quicker. Of these they make Nets for Fishing, but only for great Fish as Tarpoms, or the like.

The Tree which bears the *Calabash*<sup>2</sup> is short and thick, the *Calabash* grows up and down among the Boughs, as our Apples do. It is of a Globular figure, the out-side of it an hard Shell, holding the quantity of 2, 3, 4, or 5 Quarts. These Shells the *Indians* use as Vessels for many occasions. There are two sorts of these Trees, but the difference is chiefly in the Fruit; that of the one being sweet, the other bitter. The Substance of both is Spongy and Juicy. That of the sweeter sort does yet incline to a tart, sourish Tast. The *Indians*, however, eat them frequently in a March, tho' they are not very delightful. They only suck out the Juice, and spit out the rest. The bitter sort is not eatable, but is very Medicinal. They are good in Tertian's; and a Decoction of them in a Clyster is an admirable Specifick in the

<sup>1</sup> The 'majagua', *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, in Panama, frequently grows in swamps in association with mangroves; has yellow flowers. The tough, stringy bark is still used in country regions for making ropes and coarse textiles.

<sup>2</sup> Sp. 'calabazo', *Crescentia cujete*, common on the Pacific slope of the Isthmus and all Central American and Southern Mexico.

Tortions of the Guts or dry Gripes. The *Calabash* Shells are almost as hard as those of the *Coco-nuts*, but not half so thick. The *Darien Calabash* is painted, and much esteem'd by the *Spaniards*.

There are *Gourds* also which grow creeping along the Ground, or climbing up Trees in great quantities, like *Pompions*<sup>1</sup> or *Vines*. Of these also there are two Sorts, a Sweet and a Bitter,<sup>2</sup> the Sweet eatable, but not desirable; the Bitter medicinal in the *Passio Iliaca*, *Tertian's*, *Costiveness*, &c. taken in a Clyster. But the *Indians* value both sorts for their Shells; and the larger sort of these serve them by way of Pails and Buckets, as *Calabashes* do for Dishes, Cups, and Drinking-Vessels.

They have a Plant also which is of good use to them, call'd by us *Silk-Grass*; tho' 'tis indeed a kind of Flag.<sup>3</sup> It grows in great quantities in moist Places on the sides of Hills. The Roots are knobbed, and shoot out into Leaves like a Sword-blade, as thick as ones Hand in the middle of the Leaf towards the Root, thinner towards the Edges and the top; where it ends in a sharp Point, altogether like our Flags, save that the Leaf is much broader, and a yard or two in length, and jagged at the Edges like a Saw or some Reap-hooks. The *Indians* cut these Leaves when of a convenient Growth, and having dried them well in the Sun, they beat them into Strings like fine Flax, extraordinary strong, beyond any of our Flax or Hemp, for the Leaf it self seems to be nothing but a Congeries of Strings inclos'd with a Skin on each side. They twist these Strings as they do those of

<sup>1</sup> Pumpkins.

<sup>2</sup> All the gourds belong to the Cucurbitaceae of which many species are native to the New World: the vine *Lagenaria leucantha* called locally in Panama 'tula de mate' grows freely, but is said to be an introduction from Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Vicente Restrepo considers that this is *Agave americana*, native of Mexico, which may have been introduced into Panama. The only indigenous species of Agave is found upon the Pacific side, on islands in Panama Bay (*Agave panamana*). Perhaps, *Furcraea cabuya* was the plant noted by Wafer: it can be seen on dry and rocky ground of the Pacific slope of the Isthmus, thrusting its long, dagger-like leaf-blades, and displaying its tall pale flower-spikes, above mimosa and cactus. The stout fibre obtained from the leaves can be bought in the native quarters of Panama market.

the *Maho*-tree, and make of them Ropes for Hammocks, Cordage of all sorts, but especially a finer kind of Nets for small Fish. In *Jamaica* the Shoemakers use this for Thread to sew with, as being stronger than any other. The *Spanish* Women make Stockins of it, which are call'd *Silk-grass Stockins*, and are sold very dear. They make of it also a kind of yellowish Lace, which is much bought and worn by the *Mostesa*-women<sup>1</sup> in the *West-Indian* Plantations.

There grows here a Tree about the bigness of an Elm, the Wood of which is very light, and we therefore call it *Light-Wood*.<sup>2</sup> The Tree is streight and well-bodied, and has a great Leaf like a Wall-nut. A Man may carry on his Back a great quantity of the Wood when cut down: Its Substance resembles Cork, and is of a whitish Colour; but the Grain of it is rougher than Fir, or courser yet, like that of the *Cotton*-tree. I know not whether it has that spongy Elasticity that Cork has; yet I should think it an excellent Wood for making Tomkins,<sup>3</sup> or Stopples for the Muzzles of great Guns. 'Tis so very light in Water that three or four Logs of it, about as thick as ones Thigh and about four Foot long, shall make a Rafter on which two or three Men may go out to Sea. The *Indians* make large Rafters of it upon occasion, after this manner: they take Logs of this Wood not very big, and bind them together collaterally with *Maho*-Cords, making of them a kind of Floor. Then they lay another Range of Logs across these, at some distance from each other, and peg them down to the former with long Pins of *Macaw*-wood; and the Wood of the Float is so soft, and tenacious withal, that it easily gives admittance to the Peg upon driving, and closes fast about it. The Floats, were they boarded, would resemble our *Dyers-floats* in the *Thames* at *London*; and the *Indians* use them

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish word *mestizo* (fem. *mestiza*) for 'mixed'-blood, properly applied in the New World to a child of mixed 'Indian', i.e. native American, and European parentage. A cross between European and Negro is a *mulato* (a).

<sup>2</sup> Either the commonly-named 'balsa' (*Ochroma limonensis*), extremely light wood used for rafts, &c., or the 'cuipo' (*Cavanillesia platanifolia*), a beautiful survival of ancient forests. From the wood of the cuipo or *Ochroma* are made the 'nuchus', or the famous 'suar mimis', of the Cuna, the little figurines sent, when animated by the magicians, to the underworld to search for the ravished souls of sick people.

<sup>3</sup> Tompions.



chiefly for Passage cross a great River where Canoa's or other Trees are wanting; or for Fishing.

Another Tree they have which we call *White-wood*. The Body of it grows in heighth about 18 or 20 Foot, like a large Willow, and about as thick as ones Thigh. The Leaf is like *Senna*, very small. The Wood is very hard, close and ponderous, and exceeding White, beyond any *European* Wood that ever I saw, and of a very fine Grain, so that I cannot but think it would be very good for inlaying, or other Cabinet-work. I never saw this Tree any where but in this *Isthmus*.

They have *Tamarinds*<sup>1</sup> here of the brown sort, and good, but not well Manur'd. The Tree is a fair spreading one, and very large of the kind. The Tree grows usually in a sandy Soil, near a River.

The Tree also that bears the *Locust*-fruit grows here. The Wild sort is found in great abundance, 'tis not much unlike the *Tamarind*.

They have a *Bastard-Cinnamon* also, bearing a Cod shorter than a Bean-cod, but thicker, it grows only on the *Main*.

*Bamboes* grow here but too plentifully, like a Briar, whole Copses of them. The Branches or Canes grow in clusters 20 or 30 or more of them from one Root, and guarded with Prickles. They render the Places where they grow almost impassable, which are generally swampy Grounds, or the sides of Rivers. They are found mostly on the *Main*, the *Islands* having only some few of them.

The *Hollow Bamboes* are on the *Main* only. They grow twenty or thirty Foot in heighth, and as thick as ones Thigh. They have Knots all along at the distance of about a Foot and an half. All the Space from Knot to Knot is hollow, and of the Capacity usually of a Gallon or more, and these are serviceable on many Occasions. The Leaves of this Shrub are like Eldern-leaves, in a Cluster at the top of each Cane, and these also grow thick together in Copses.

<sup>1</sup> *Tamarindus indica*. Not native to the Americas; introduced from the East Indies in early colonial times, and to-day naturalized in Panama and neighbouring regions. Several kinds of native American trees, with finely-divided leaves and bearing a sweet edible pod, and thus resembling the 'carob' of Africa, were called by the name 'al-garrobo', by the Spanish colonists. In Panama the 'algarrobo' is usually *Hymenaea courbaril*.

*Mangrove*-Trees grow out of the Water, both in the Islands and the Main, rising from several Roots like Stilts entangled one among another. The Roots or Stumps appear some Feet above Water, rising from a pretty depth also from under the Surface of it, and at length they unite all together, Arbour-wise, into the Body of a lusty tall Tree, of a Foot or two Diameter. There is scarce any passing along where these Trees grow, the Roots of them are so blended together. The Bark of the *Mangroves* that grows in Salt Water is of a red Colour, and is us'd for tanning of Leather. I have some Reason to think that the Tree from whence the *Peruvian* or *Jesuits Bark* is fetcht is of the *Mangrove* kind;<sup>1</sup> for when I was last at *Arica* in *Peru*, I saw a Caravan of about 20 Mules with this Bark just come in, and then unlading at a Store-house. One of our Company, who spake *Spanish*, ask'd a *Spaniard* who guided the Drove, from whence he fetch'd that Bark? He answered, from a great fresh Water Lake behind a Mountain a great way within Land; at the same time pointing at a very high Ridge of Hills we saw at a great distance from us, and the Sea. Being further examined as to the Tree it grew on, he so describ'd it, by these intangled Stilts, and other Particulars, that our Interpreter said to him, Sure it must be a *Mangrove*-Tree! The *Spaniard* answer'd, Yes, a fresh-water *Mangrove*. Yet he said it was a very small Tree, which the *Mangrove* is not, unless this should be a Dwarf kind of it. We brought away with us several Bundles of this Bark, and I found it to be the right sort, by the frequent use I made of it in *Virginia* and elsewhere; and I have some of it now by me.

They have two sorts of *Pepper*,<sup>2</sup> the one called *Bell-Pepper*, the other *Bird-Pepper*, and great quantities of each, much used by the *Indians*. Each sort grows on a Weed, or Shrubby Bush about a Yard high. The *Bird-Pepper* has the smaller Leaf, and is by the *Indians* better esteemed than the other, for they eat a great deal of it.

<sup>1</sup> *Rhizophora mangle*: the astringent bark is used medicinally by the native folk, but the tree is not related to *Cinchona* (of the great Madder family) which is not found north of the Republic of Colombia. The wood of *mangle* makes the best charcoal; and red and brown dyes are obtained from the bark or tips of growing branches.

<sup>2</sup> Several varieties of *Capsicum* are native to tropical America; Standley

There is on the *Main* a *Red* sort of *Wood* that might be of good use for Dyers.<sup>1</sup> It grows mostly towards the *North-Sea* Coast, upon a River that runs towards the *Sambaloes*, about two Miles from the Sea-shore. I saw there great quantities of these Trees: They are thirty or forty Foot high, about as big as ones Thigh, and the out-side is all along full of Cavities or Notches in the Bark. When the Wood is cut, it appears of a Yellowish Red. With this, and a kind of Earth which they have up the Country, the *Indians* die Cottons for their Hammocks and Gowns. I tried a little of it, which upon boiling two Hours in fair Water, turn'd it Red as Blood. I dipt therein a piece of Cotton, which it died of a good Red; and when I wash'd it, it turn'd but a little paler, which I imputed to the want only of something to fix the Colour; for no washing could fetch out the Tincture. 'Twas a bright and glossy Red, very lively.

The *Indians* have several Roots which they plant; especially *Potato's*,<sup>2</sup> which they roast and eat.

They do the same also by *Yams*,<sup>3</sup> of which they have two sorts, a White and a Purple.

They have a Root call'd *Cassava*,<sup>4</sup> not much unlike a Parsnip. There are two sorts also of these, a *Sweet* and a *Poisonous*. The

considers that *Capsicum baccatum*, a wild shrub, is the 'primitive wild form of the American peppers'. *Capsicum annuum* yields the 'aji' of the Aztecs and 'chile' of Central America. All varieties are eaten in great quantities by native tribes, especially in hot zones.

<sup>1</sup> The true logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*) is said not to grow south of British Honduras. Wafer's 'red wood' may be *Pterocarpus draco*, a tree of some size growing in social groups on the Caribbean slope. The red, resinous dye is obtained from the bark.

<sup>2</sup> This is the 'sweet potato', *Convolvulus batata*: taken to England a century before the introduction (from the west coast of South America) of *Solanum tuberosum*, 'papas', to which the word potato has since been applied.

<sup>3</sup> The yam (from the African 'intrame') was probably introduced into Darien soon after the occupation of the Gulf of Urabá, although wild species are found as near as British Guiana. The best-known of the plants cultivated in Panama is *Dioscorea batata*.

<sup>4</sup> Cassava (yuca, oca, mandioca) is a true native of the New World, and one of the indispensable food plants, yielding the chief 'bread-kind' in some regions, as maize does in others. The sweet cassava, *Manihot palmata aipi*, is chiefly grown on the Isthmus, but the bitter variety, *Manihot utilissima*, is also eaten, after the hydrocyanic acid has been extracted. From the bitter cassava is made 'cassareep' used as a foundation for sauces.

*Sweet Sort* they roast and eat as they do *Potato's* or *Yams*. Of the *Poisonous* they make Bread, having first press'd out the Juice, which is noxious. Part of the remaining Substance they grate to a Powder; and having a Baking-stone or Trivet set over a Fire, they strew the Flower over the hot Stone gradually, which bakes it all to a Cake, the bottom hard-bak'd and brown, the rest rough and white, like our Oat-cakes; they use to hang them on the Houses or Hedges, where they dry and grow crisp. In *Jamaica* they use them frequently instead of Bread; and so in other of the *West-Indian* Islands.

These *Indians* have *Tobacco* among them. It grows as the *Tobacco* in *Virginia*, but is not so strong, perhaps for want of transplanting and manuring, which the *Indians* don't well understand; for they only raise it from the Seed in their Plantations. When 'tis dried and cured they strip it from the Stalks; and laying two or three Leaves upon one another, they roll up all together side-ways into a long Roll, yet leaving a little hollow. Round this they roll other Leaves one after another, in the same manner but close and hard, till the Roll be as big as ones Wrist, and two or three Feet in length. Their way of Smoaking when they are in Company together is thus: a Boy lights one end of a Roll and burns it to a Coal, wetting the part next it to keep it from wasting too fast. The End so lighted he puts into his Mouth, and blows the Smoak through the whole length of the Roll into the Face of every one of the Company or Council, tho' there be 2 or 300 of them. Then they, sitting in their usual Posture upon Forms, make, with their Hands held hollow together, a kind of Funnel round their Mouths and Noses. Into this they receive the Smoak as 'tis blown upon them, snuffing it up greedily and strongly as long as ever they are able to hold their Breath, and seeming to bless themselves, as it were, with the Refreshment it gives them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The San Blas Indians continue to use tobacco in this manner, i.e. as a fumigant. The *inatuledis* (medicine men) employ tobacco and other aromatic herbs in sickness, to render the patient drowsy or comatose, and to induce heavy perspiration.

## Of the Animals: and first of Beasts and Reptiles.

THE Variety of Beasts in this Country is not very great; but the Land is so Fertile, that upon clearing any considerable part of the Woods it would doubtless afford excellent Pasture, for the maintaining black Cattle, Swine, or whatever other Beasts 'tis usual to bring out of *Europe* into these Climates.

The Country has of its own a kind of Hog, which is call'd *Pecary*,<sup>1</sup> not much unlike a *Virginia* Hog. 'Tis black, and has little short Legs, yet is pretty nimble. It has one thing very strange, that the Navel is not upon the Belly, but the Back. And what is more still, if upon killing a *Pecary* the Navel be not cut away from the Carkass within three or four Hours after at farthest, 'twill so taint all the Flesh, as not only to render it unfit to be eaten, but make it stink insufferably. Else 'twill keep fresh several Days, and is very good wholesome Meat, nourishing and well-tasted. The *Indians* barbecue it, when they would keep any of it longer. The manner in which they do it I shall describe elsewhere. These Creatures usually herd together, and range about in Drove; and the *Indians* either hunt them down with their Dogs, and so strike them with their Lances, or else shoot them with their Arrows, as they have opportunity.

The *Warree*<sup>2</sup> is another kind of Wild-Hog they have, which is also very good Meat. It has little Ears, but very great Tusks; and the Hair or Bristles 'tis cover'd with are long, strong and thickset, like a course Furr all over its Body. The *Warree* is fierce, and fights with the *Pecary*, or any other Creature that comes in his way. The *Indians* hunt these also as the other, and manage their Flesh the same way, except only as to what concerns the Navel; the singularity of which is peculiar to the *Pecary*.

<sup>1</sup> The peccary, a pig-like mammal of the genus *Tagassú*: has a back-gland, and three toes on the hind foot; black, with white hairs on the cheeks; gregarious. Delicious meat. The peccary of Darien is *T. albirostris*.

<sup>2</sup> The 'warree' of Central America is larger than the peccary, but smaller than the wild boar of Europe; its coat is black, or grizzled, and its temper uncertain. Still found plentifully in Panama woodlands.

They have considerable store of *Deer* also, resembling most our *Red Deer*; but these they never hunt nor kill; nor will they ever eat of their *Flesh*, tho' 'tis very good; but we were not shy of it. Whether it be out of Superstition, or for any other Reason that they forbear them, I know not. But when they saw some of our Men killing and eating of them, they not only refus'd to eat with them, but seem'd displeas'd with them for it. Yet they preserve the Horns of these *Deer*, setting them up in their Houses; but they are such only as they shed, for I never saw among them so much as the Skin or Head of any of them, that might shew they had been kill'd by the *Indians*; and they are too nimble for the *Warree*, if not a Match for him.

The *Dogs* they have are small, not well-shap'd, their Hair rough and stragling, like our Mungrels. They serve only to bark and start the Game, or by their barking give notice to the Hunters to shoot their Arrows. They will run about in this manner from Morning to Night; but are such meer whiffing Curs, that of 2 or 300 Beasts started in a Day, they shall seldom kill above two or three; and these not by running them down, but by getting them at a Bay and besetting them, till the Hunters can come up with them. Large strong Dogs would make better Work here; and it might be a very acceptable Thing to the *Indians* to transport hither a Breed of such. But then they must keep to their Houses, or they would be in danger of running Wild, in this Country.

Here are *Rabbits*, call'd by our *English*, *Indian Conies*.<sup>1</sup> They are as large as our Hares; but I know not that this Country has any Hares. These Rabbits have no Tails, and but little short Ears; and the Claws of their Feet are long. They lodge in the Roots of Trees, making no Burrows; and the *Indians* hunt them, but there is no great plenty of them. They are very good Meat, and eat rather moister than ours.

There are great Drovers of *Monkeys*, some of them white, but

<sup>1</sup> This 'Indian Coney' is the rodent *Dasyprocta agouti*: lives in holes and is easily tamed. No true rabbits are native to Panama; the 'Member of the Royal Society' who contributed natural history notes to Wafer's second edition mentions: 'The Spotted Rabbit: These have round ears with white, black, and reddish spots. When tame they grunt for their food'. He also speaks of 'The River Hog: Feeds on grass and divers fruits, can swim and dive well; they make a hideous noise in the Night, braying like an Ass'.

most of them black; some have Beards, others are beardless. They are of a middle Size, yet extraordinary fat at the dry Season, when the Fruits are ripe; and they are very good Meat, for we ate of them very plentifully. The *Indians* were shy of eating them for a while; but they soon were persuaded to it, by seeing us feed on them so heartily. In the Rainy Season they have often Worms in their Bowels. I have taken a handful of them out of one Monkey we cut open; and some of them 7 or 8 Foot long. They are a very waggish kind of Monkey, and plaid a thousand antick Tricks as we march'd at any time through the Woods, skipping from Bough to Bough, with the young ones hanging at the old ones Back, making Faces at us, chattering, and, if they had opportunity, pissing down purposely on our Heads. To pass from top to top of high Trees, whose Branches are a little too far asunder for their Leaping, they will sometimes hang down by one anothers Tails in a Chain; and swinging in that manner, the lowermost catches hold of a Bough of the other Tree, and draws up the rest of them.

Here are no Bullocks, Horses, Asses, Sheep, Goats, or other such Beasts as we have for Food or Service. They are exceedingly pester'd with Mice and Rats, which are mostly Grey; and a Brood of Cats therefore to destroy these, might be as acceptable a Present to them as better Dogs for their Hunting. When I left the *Isthmus*, 2 of the *Indians* who came aboard the same Vessel at the *Samballoe's*, went a Cruising with us towards the *Corn-Islands* and *Cartagene*, and when they were dispos'd to return, and we were studying to oblige 'em with some Present, one of them spied a Cat we had aboard, and beg'd it, which we had no sooner given him, but he and his Consort, without staying for any other Gift, went immediately into their Canoa, and padled off with abundance of Joy. They had learnt the use of Cats while they were aboard.

They have Snakes, but of what kind I don't well remember; nor did I see or hear any Rattle-Snakes. Spiders they have many, very large, but not poisonous. They have Lice in their Heads; which they feel out with their Fingers, and eat as they catch them.

There is a sort of Insect like a Snail in great plenty among the *Samballoe's*, which is call'd the *Soldier-Insect*; but I don't remember I saw any of them upon the Main. The reason of the

Name, is because of the Colour; for one third part of his Body, about his Head, which is out of the Shell, is in Shape and Colour like a boil'd Shrimp, with little Claws, and 2 larger like those of a Crab. That part within the Shell, the Tail especially, is eatable, and is good Food, very well tasted and delicious, like Marrow. We thrust a Skuer through this part, and roast a pretty many of them in a row. The forepart is bony, and useless. They feed upon the Ground, eating what falls from Trees, and they have under the Chin a little Bag, into which they put a reserve of Food. Beside this, they have in them a little Sand Bag, which must always be taken out when they are to be eaten. This Bag is commonly pretty full of Sand: and Conchs and Welks, and other Shell-fish, have usually Sand in a Vessel that runs the length of the Body, in manner of a Gut, which we are forc'd to take out, for else they would be gritty in ones Teeth. If these *Soldiers* eat of any of the *Manchineel*-Apples which drop from the Trees, their Flesh becomes so infected with that virulent Juice, as to poison in a manner those who eat of it, and we have had some of our Company very sick by eating such as had fed on *Manchineel*; but after a while 'twould wear off again, without further damage. The Oil of these Insects is a most Sovereign Remedy for any Sprain or Contusion. I have found it so, as many others have done frequently. The *Indians* use it that way very successfully, and many of the Privateers in the *West-Indies*, and our Men sought them as much for the Oil as for the sake of eating them. The Oil is of a yellow Colour, like Wax, but of the Consistency of Palm-Oil.

On the *Samballoe's* I think there are also *Land-Crabs*, tho' but few. But in the *Caribbee*-Islands, among which I have been Cruising, and especially on *Anguilla*,<sup>1</sup> they are very numerous, and some very large, as big as the largest Sea-Crabs that are sold at *London*. They have them also in other of the *West-India* Islands; but on *Anguilla* they swarm; and a little Island near it has such multitudes of them, that 'tis call'd *Crab-Island*. They are excellent good Meat, and are the main Support of the Inhabitants, who range about a Crabbing, as they call it. After a Shower of Rain they will come abroad; and then is the best time to look out for them. They live in Holes or Burrows like

<sup>1</sup> Northernmost of the Leeward Islands.



Rabbits, which they dig for themselves with their Claws. When they are upon the March they never go about, nor turn their Backs, but crawl over any thing that lies in their way, guarding with their great Claws, while they creep with the small ones; and whatever they lay hold of they pinch very severely. The Inhabitants of some of these Isles, when they take any of them, put them for three or four Days into a piece of *Potato*-ground, to fatten them; for which they are said to eat much the better.

*Alligator's* and *Guano's*<sup>1</sup> which are also very good Meat, especially the Tail of the *Alligator*, I have eaten in several Parts of the *West-Indies*; but I don't remember my seeing either of them in the *Isthmus*. The *Guano* is all over very good Meat, prefer'd to a Pullet or Chicken, either for the Meat or Broth. Their Eggs also are very good; but those of the *Alligator* have too much of a musky Flavour, and sometimes smell very strong of it. There are up and down the *Isthmus* a great many Lizards, green, and red-speckled; but those in the Swampy Land and Thickets look more black or rusty. They are none of them large; generally less than a Span. I never saw the *Indians* eat of them.<sup>2</sup> They are pretty innocent familiar Creatures, and the *Indians* suffer them to creep up and down their Houses.

They have Frogs and Toads, and other smaller Insects;<sup>3</sup> but I took no particular Notice of them.

<sup>1</sup> Iguanas: thick-tongued lizards of the *Iguanidae* family; all feed on leaves and other soft vegetation. Dampier says that in the Galapagos Islands 'guanoes' are fat, tame, and very good to eat: 'their flesh is much esteemed by Privateers, who commonly dress them for their sick men; for they make very good Broath'.

Almost all the *Iguanidae* are natives of the New World tropics; most commonly seen in Caribbean regions is the brilliant green *Iguana tuberculatus*, often 5 ft. long, whose habitat is in trees near streams. Easily knocked over or caught in the water, they are not easily killed; and although hunted continually for their white, delicate flesh, and for the soft-shelled, heavily-yolked eggs (which, dried and stored, keep for many weeks) they are sufficiently prolific to withstand centuries of attack.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently some lizards of the Caribbean are edible. Colonel Doyly, Governor of Jamaica when the English first took possession of the island, told Sloane in 1687 that lizards were sold in the public markets 'at a very dear rate' when provisions were scarce.

<sup>3</sup> The Member of the Royal Society lists among the insects of the region, the 'Green Mantiss: somewhat like a Locust, but has a long slender Neck like a Camel'.

## The Birds, and Flying Insects

THEY have several sorts of Birds, some of Kinds unknown to us; and remarkable both for their Beauty, and the good Relish of their Flesh.

There is one stately kind of Land-bird, pretty common among the Woods on the *Isthmus*, which is call'd by the *Indians* *Chicaly-Chicaly*.<sup>1</sup> Its Noise is somewhat like a Cuckow's, but sharper and quicker. 'Tis a large and long Bird, and has a long Tail, which he carries upright like a Dunghill Cock. His Feathers are of great variety of fine lively Colours, red, blue, &c. The *Indians* make a sort of Aprons, sometimes, of the Feathers which grow on his Back; but these they seldom wear. This Bird keeps mostly on the Trees, flying from one to another, and but rarely to the Ground. He feeds on Fruit. His Flesh is blackish, and of a course Grain, yet pretty good Meat.

The *Quam*<sup>2</sup> is also a large and long Land-bird. He feeds also upon Fruits, and flies up and down the Trees. His Wings are of a Dun Colour, but his Tail is very dark, short, stumpy, and upright. This Bird is much better Meat than the other.

There is also a Russet-colour'd Land-bird, shap'd not unlike a Partridge; but has a longer Neck and Legs, yet a short Tail. He runs most on the Ground, and seldom flies. His Flesh is very good Meat.<sup>3</sup>

The *Corrosou*<sup>4</sup> is a large, black Land-bird, heavy and big as a Turkey-hen; but the Hen is not so black as the Cock. The Cock has on his Head a fine Crown or Comb of yellow Feathers, which he moves to and fro as he pleases. He has Gills also like

<sup>1</sup> Mex. 'chacalaca'; of the Guan family. Wafer's 'chicaly-chicaly' is probably one of the *Ortalis* genus.

<sup>2</sup> The Guans constitute a sub-family of the *Penelopinae*, allied to the *Cracidae*; arboreal, gallinaceous birds peculiar to Central and South America. Wafer's 'quam' is probably *Penelope cristata*, a large but inconspicuous bird with a pheasant-like flavour.

<sup>3</sup> Probably *Tetrao naevis*, often called a 'partridge', or 'South American quail', but rather resembling a guinea-fowl; related to the rufous tinamores of the pampas.

<sup>4</sup> The Curassow (from Curaçao island, where the bird is native), one of the *Cracidae*: arboreal, gallinaceous; very good meat.

a Turkey; but the Hen has neither Plume nor Gills. They live on the Trees, and feed on Fruits. They Sing or make a Noise big and gross, yet very sweet and delightful, especially to the *Indians*, who endeavour to imitate them. And the *Indians* and they will sometimes answer one another this way, and the *Indians* discover their Haunts by it. The old ones also call their young ones by this Sound. The Flesh is somewhat tough, but otherwise very good and well-tasted Meat. The *Indians* either throw the Bones of the *Corrosou* into the River, or make a Hole and bury them, to keep them from their Dogs, being thought unwholesome for the Dogs to eat; and the *Indians* say they will make the Dogs run mad. Neither do the *English* in the *West-Indies* let the Dogs eat of them. The *Indians* shoot down all these Birds with their Arrows.

They have *Parrots* good store, some blue and some green, for Shape and Size like the generality of the Parrots we have from *Jamaica*. There is here great variety of them, and they are very good Meat.

They have also many *Parakites*, most of them Green; generally much the same as in other Places. They don't sort with the Parrots, but go in large Flights by themselves.

*Macaw-birds*<sup>1</sup> are here also in good plenty. 'Tis shap'd not much unlike a Parrot, but is as large again as the biggest of them. It has a Bill like a Hawk's; and a bushy Tail, with two or three long stragling Feathers, all Red or Blue. The Feathers all over the Body are of several very bright and lovely Colours, Blue, Green and Red. The Pinions of the Wings of some of them are all Red, of others all Blue, and the Beaks yellow. They make a great Noise in a Morning, very hoarse and deep, like Men who speak much in the Throat. The *Indians* keep these Birds tame, as we do Parrots, or Mag-pies. But after they have kept them close some time, and taught them to speak some Words in their Language, they suffer them to go abroad in the Day-time into the Woods, among the wild ones; from whence they will on their own accord return in the Evening to the *Indian's* Houses or Plantations, and give notice of their arrival by their fluttering and prating. They will exactly imitate the *Indian's* Voices, and their way of Singing, and they will call

<sup>1</sup> Parrots of the genus *Ara*.

the *Chicaly-Chicaly* in its own Note, as exactly as the *Indians* themselves, whom I have observ'd to be very expert at it. 'Tis the most beautiful and pleasant Bird that ever I saw; and the Flesh is sweet-tasted enough, but black and tough.

There is also a sort of *Wood-pecker*, with such a long slender Bill as that kind of Birds have. These have strong Claws, wherewith they climb up and down the Bodies of Trees, and stick very close to them. They are pied like our Mag-pies, white and black; but more finely, being a smaller Bird. The Flesh is of an earthy unpleasant Tast. I tasted of them as I was travelling with my Companions, for Hunger then made us glad of any thing of Food; but the *Indians* don't eat of them.

They have great plenty of Poultry<sup>1</sup> tame about their Houses, of 2 sorts, a greater and a less. The larger sort are much like ours, of different Colours and Breed, as Copple-crown'd,<sup>2</sup> the common Dunghil Cock and Hen, and of the Game kind; tho' these *Indians* don't delight in Cock-fighting as those of *Java* do. The smaller sort are feather'd about the Legs like Carrier-pigeons, and have very bushy Tails, which they carry upright; and the tips of the Wings are generally black. This small sort keep apart from the other. They all keep the same Crowing Season, before Day, as our Cocks do. They are constantly about the Houses, not ranging far into the Woods; and both their Flesh and their Eggs are as well-tasted as any we have in *England*; and they are generally fatter; for the *Indians* give them Maiz good store, which is very fattening.

These are all the kinds of Land-birds I noted among them, though there are many small ones which I did not so particularly observe; and these generally very pretty and musical.

About the *Sambaloes* and the other Islands, and the Sea-Coast, on the North-side especially, there are great numbers of Sea-fowl. The South-Sea Coast, more to Windward, has many of them too; but whether it be that the Bay of *Panama* does not

<sup>1</sup> None are native to the Americas, owing their introduction into the Americas to the European colonist. Strict laws, enforced by the Casa de Contracción in Seville, specified the kind and number of domestic animals which settlers were obliged to take from Spain. Cattle and horses, in favourable localities, multiplied with extraordinary rapidity, while cocks and hens spread all over the areas entered by the Spanish within a few years.

<sup>2</sup> Crested.

afford so many Fish to invite them, for 'tis not near so well-stock'd with Fish as the Coast about the *Samballoe*s, there are but very few Sea-fowl on the South-Sea Coast of the *Isthmus*, to what there are on the North-Coast; and as to *Pelicans* particularly, which are very frequent among the *Samballoe*s, and all along the *West-India* Coasts, I don't remember that I ever saw one of them any where in the South Seas.

The *Pelican* is a large Bird, with a great Beak, short-legg'd like a Goose; and has a long Neck, which it holds upright like a Swan. The Feathers are of dark Grey; 'tis Web-footed. Under the Throat hangs a Bag or Pouch, which, when fill'd, is as large as both ones Fists. The Substance of it is a thin Membrane, of a fine, grey, ashy Colour. The Seamen kill them for the Sake of these Bags, to make Tobacco-pouches of them; for, when dry, they will hold a Pound of Tobacco; and by a Bullet hung in them, they are soon brought into Shape. The *Pelican* flies heavy and low; we find nothing but Fish in his Maw, for that is his Food. His Pouch, as well as Stomach, has Fish found in it, so that it seems likely that the Pouch is a Bag intended to keep a Reserve of Food. I have never seen any of the old *Pelicans* eaten; but the young ones are said to be Meat good enough, but I have never eaten of any of them.

There are *Cormorants* also among the *Samballoe*s, which for Size and Shape are like Ducks, but rather less. They are black, but have a white Spot on the Breast. Tho' they are Web-footed, as other Water-fowl are, yet they pitch on Trees and Shrubs by the Water-side. I have never heard of any one's eating of these, for their Flesh is thought to be too coarse and rank.

There are a great many Sea-Gulls also and Sea-Pies, on that Coast; both of them much like ours, but rather smaller. The Flesh of both these is eaten commonly enough, and 'tis tolerable good Meat, but of a Fishy Tast, as Sea-fowl usually are. Yet to correct this Tast, when we kill'd any Sea-Gulls, Sea-Pies, Boobies, or the like, on any Shore, we us'd to make a Hole in the hot Sand, and there bury them for eight or ten Hours, with their Feathers on, and Guts in them; and upon dressing them afterwards, we found the Flesh tenderer, and the Tast not so rank nor fishy.

There are *Bats*, on the *Isthmus*, the Bodies of which are as

large as Pigeons, and their Wings extended to a proportionable length and breadth; with Claws at the Joints of the Wings, by which they cling to any thing. They much haunt old Houses and deserted Plantations.

Of Flying Insects, beside the Moskito's or Gnats before-mention'd, there are up and down the *Isthmus* Wasps and Beetles, and Flies of several kinds, particularly the Shining Fly, which shines in the Night like a Glow-worm; and where there are many of them in a Thicket, they appear in the Night like so many Sparks of Fire.

They have *Bees* also, and consequently Hony and Wax. The Bees are of two sorts; the one short and thick, and its Colour inclining to Red; the other blackish, long and slender. They nest on the tops and in the holes of Trees; which the *Indians* climb, and thrust their Arms into their Nest, to get the Combs. Their Arms will be cover'd with Bees, upon their drawing them back; yet I never perceiv'd they were stung by them. And I have had many of them at a time upon my naked Body, without being stung; so that I have been inclin'd to think they have no Stings. But that's a thing I never examin'd. The *Indians* sometimes burn down the Trees to get at the Combs, especially if they be high and difficult to climb. The Hony they mix with Water, and drink it, but they make no use of the Wax, that ever I saw, using for Candles a sort of light Wood, which they keep in their Houses for that purpose.<sup>1</sup>

They have Ants with Wings, large and long, as well as those which are Reptile only. They raise Hillocks like ours. They sting, and are very troublesome; especially when they get into the Houses, as they frequently do. They swarm up and down the *Samballoes* and the other Neighbouring Isles, as well as on the *Isthmus* it self; and there is no lying down to Rest on any piece of Ground where they are. Neither do the *Indians* care to tie their Hammocks to any Trees near the Ant-hills; for the Ants would climb up such Trees, and soon get into their Hammocks.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, strips of *Nectandra globoso*, common in Panama, readily-burning; called 'candlewood' in Jamaica. Or Wafer may have seen the *Indians* using the oily fruit of the 'candle-tree' (*Parmentiera*), also native on the *Isthmus*; the 'candles' are hung up in bunches in Indian huts, dried, and burnt at evening gatherings. They form a valuable food for cattle.

## Of the Fish.

THE North-Sea Coast, as I intimated, abounds in Fish, and has great variety of them. Those which I have had the opportunity of seeing, are chiefly these:

The *Tarpom*,<sup>1</sup> which is a large and firm Fish, eating in Flakes like Salmon or Cod. They are some of 50 or 60 Pound weight and upwards. One of them afforded a good Dinner once to about ten of us, as we were cruising towards the Coast of *Cartagene*; beside a good quantity of Oil we got out of the Fat.

*Sharks* are also found in these Seas; tho' not so commonly about the *Samballoes*, as on other of the *West-India* Coasts.

There is a Fish there like the Shark, but much smaller and sweeter Meat. Its Mouth is also longer and narrower than the Sharks; neither has he more than one Row of Teeth. Our Seamen us'd to call this the *Dog-fish*.<sup>2</sup>

The *Cavally*<sup>3</sup> is found among the *Samballoes*. 'Tis a small Fish, clean, long, and slender, much about the size of a Macarel; a very fine lively Fish, with a bright, large Eye; and 'tis very good Meat, moist and well-tasted.

*Old-wives*,<sup>4</sup> which is a flat kind of Fish, and good Meat, are there also.

They have *Paracoods*<sup>5</sup> also, which are a long and round Fish, about as large as a well-grown Pike, but usually much longer. They are generally very good Meat; and here especially. But there are some particular Banks off at Sea, where you can take no *Paracoods* but what are poisonous. Whether it be from some

<sup>1</sup> *Tarpon atlanticus*: not usually considered edible.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dog-fish' is applied to several species of fish possessing the characteristic shark mouth, i.e. situated under the head. Wafer's dog-fish may have been *Squalus acanthias*, or *Cynias canis*; both belong to shark families, and live in Caribbean waters.

<sup>3</sup> The 'caballo', 'horse-mackerel', or 'Spanish mackerel'. Excellent eating: one of the *Scombridae* family.

<sup>4</sup> May be one of the Trigger fish, perhaps *Balistes betula*, common in the West Indies; or perhaps the 'pompano', *Trachinotus goodei*.

<sup>5</sup> The barracouta, a fierce fish common in Caribbean waters; belongs to the *Sphyraenidae* family, and is kin to the grey mullet. In Cuba the fish is reputed poisonous.

particular Feed they have there, or from what other Cause, I know not; but I have known several Men poison'd with them, to that degree as to have their Hair and Nails come off; and some have died with eating them. The Antidote for this is said to be the Back-bone of the Fish, dried and beaten to a Powder, and given in any Liquor. I can't vouch for the Success of this my self; but several have told me that they have us'd it themselves, when they have found themselves sick with eating any *Paracood*; but that upon taking the Bone thus powder'd, they have found no other ill Effect, but only a Nummedness in their Limbs, and a Weakness for some time after. Some will pretend to distinguish a poisonous *Paracood* from a wholesome one, by the Liver; which as soon as they have taken the Fish, they pull out and tast. If it tast sweet, they dress and eat the Fish without any Fear; but if the Liver be bitter, or bite the Tongue like Pepper, they conclude the Fish to be naught, and throw it away.

There is another sort of Fish on the North-Sea Coast, which our Sea-men call *Gar-fish*.<sup>1</sup> Some of them are near two Foot long. They have a long Bone on the Snout, of about a 3<sup>d</sup> part the length of the Body; and 'tis very sharp at the end. They will glide along the Surface of the Water as swift as a Swallow, gliding thus on the Surface, and leaping out of the Water, alternately, 30 or 40 times together. They move with such a Force, that, as I have been inform'd, they will run their Snout through the side of a Canoa;<sup>2</sup> and 'tis dangerous for a Man who is Swimming to meet with them, lest they strike through him. The Back-bone looks blewish, of a Colour towards a Sapphire. The Flesh is very good Meat.

There are *Sculpins*<sup>3</sup> also, a Fish about a Foot long, with Prickles all about him. They strip them of their prickly Skin, and then dress them. They are very good Meat.

There are in the North-Sea many other Fish beside these, as

<sup>1</sup> Pike-like gars of all sizes are found in West Indian waters; the alligator-gar grows to ten or more feet.

<sup>2</sup> This part of the description seems to fit the sword-fish (*Xiphias gladius*, excellent eating), rather than any of the gars.

<sup>3</sup> Scorpion-fish, with the typical spines and broad mouth of the Cottidae family of the Loricati group.



*Sting-rays, Parrot-fish, Snooks, Conger-Eels, &c.* and many others, probably, that I have neither seen nor heard of; for 'tis a Sea very well stor'd with Fish.

Of Shell-fish, there are *Conchs*<sup>1</sup> all along the *Sambaloes* in abundance. Their Shells are very large, winding within like a Snail-shell; the Mouth of the Shell is flat, and very wide, proportionably to the bigness of the Shell. The Colour of it within is like Mother of Pearl; but without, 'tis coarse and rugged. The Fish is slimy, the outparts of it especially, and must therefore be scour'd with Sand before 'tis dressed for Eating. But within, the Substance is hard and tough; for which Reason they beat them after they have scour'd the out-side. But when they have been thus managed, they are a very sweet and good Fish.

There are *Periwinkle's* good store among the Rocks; which are also good Meat. We pick them out of the Shells with Pins.

The *Limpits* also stick to the Rocks hereabouts; and are rather better Meat than the other.

There are no Oysters<sup>2</sup> nor Lobsters on the Coast of the *Isthmus*; but a few Crabs, and a sort of Craw-fish among the Rocks of the *Sambaloes*, as large as small Lobsters, but wanting the two great Claws. These last are very delicious Meat; but the Sea-Crabs are not very good.

There are Fish in the Rivers also of the *Isthmus*; but I am not acquainted with many of the kinds of them.<sup>3</sup>

There is one sort like our Roach, blackish and very bony, in length about a Foot, very sweet, firm, and well-tasted.

There is another Fish in shape like the *Paracood*, but much smaller, and a very good Fish.

There is a Fish like our Pike or Jack for Shape; but not above 8 or 10 Inches long. His Mouth is somewhat like a Rabbits, his Teeth a little way within: his Lips are Cartilaginous. 'Tis a very good Fish.

<sup>1</sup> *Strombus gigas*: sometimes yield fine pink pearls.

<sup>2</sup> Wafer had no opportunity for getting them; but as a matter of fact excellent oysters are obtained on the Pacific coast and are sold in Panama City.

<sup>3</sup> The Member of the Royal Society mentions a fish called the 'Violin: it's taken in the upland rivers in Stormy weather; the flesh intoxicates'.

What other Fish their Rivers yield, I know not; for I took no very particular notice even of these.

But I was more observing of the *Indians* manner of *Fishing*, at which they are very expert, and manage it differently, according to the Place where they Fish. In the Rivers Mouths, and upon the Sea-Coasts, in Sandy-bays where there are no Rocks, they use Nets like our Drag-nets, made of *Maho*-bark, or Silk-grass, which they carry out in their Canoa's. But in the Hill-Country, where the Streams are clear, and the Banks in many places Rocky, they go along the Banks up the River, looking narrowly into the Water to view the Fish. When they spy any to their Mind, they leap into the Water, and wade or swim up and down after them; and if the Fish, through the Fright, betake themselves into the holes in the Banks for Shelter, as they frequently do, the *Indians* feel them out with their Hands and take them thence, as we do Chubs or Craw-fish in our Rivers. By Night they bring with them Torches of Light-wood, and with these they spy out the Fish, and so jump in, and pursue them into their Holes.

For *dressing* their Fish; they first gut them, and then either boil them in an Earthen Pot, or else *barbecue* or broil them.

For *Salt*, they have it out of the Sea-water; which they boil up and evaporate in Earthen Pots, till the Salt is left in a Cake at the bottom, which they take out and break in pieces for use. But as this is a tedious way, so they have but little, and are very choice and sparing of it. They don't salt their Fish for keeping; but when they eat it, they boil abundance of Pepper with it, as they do with every thing else. But their Cookery I shall speak of elsewhere.

## Of the Indian Inhabitants: their Manners, Customs, &c.

THE *Indian* Inhabitants of the *Isthmus* are not very numerous, but they live thickest on the North-side, especially along the sides of Rivers.<sup>1</sup> The wild *Indians* of the South-side live most towards *Peru*<sup>2</sup> But there are *Indians* scatter'd up and down all parts of the *Isthmus*.

The size of the Men is usually about 5 or 6 Foot. They are streight and clean-limb'd, big-bon'd, full-breasted, and handsomly shap'd. I never saw among them a crooked or deformed Person. They are very nimble and active, running very well. But the Women are short and thick, and not so lively as the Men. The young Women are very plump and fat. well-shap'd; and have a brisk Eye.<sup>3</sup> The elder Women are very ordinary; their Bellies and Breasts being pensile and wrinkled. Both Men and Women are of a round Visage, with short bottle Noses, their Eyes large, generally grey, yet lively and sparkling when young. They have a high Forehead, white even Teeth, thin Lips, and Mouth moderately large. Their Cheeks and

<sup>1</sup> Cuna-speaking folk. Wafer's host was a Cuna chieftain. Since his day many of the Cuna have migrated to the Atlantic coast and islets.

<sup>2</sup> Chocó tribes, allied to the Chibcha of Colombia. Cuna and Chocó have lived side by side for centuries without mingling.

<sup>3</sup> The Cuna women have always had a reputation for fidelity, modesty, and intelligence. Males outnumber females, and in consequence the women are jealously guarded; few cases occur of Cuna women 'marrying' foreigners, although a number of French Huguenot sea-rovers succeeded in thus allying themselves to the tribes; and in the earliest Spanish colonial days some Spaniards, Balboa for example, had Indian wives. Bishop Piedrahita, about Wafer's time, noted that although the Darien men went naked, the women were always modestly clothed 'in cotton garments curiously embroidered'; Ringrose thought them 'very free and brisk but very cautious in their husbands' presence'; the author of Sloane MS. 2752 thought the 'Kings daughters' were 'comely' and said they had 'fine cotton roped about their bodies'; and although he adds that they 'fantsied much to be in our company', he makes no such scandalous suggestion as Sharp, in his Journal of 7th April, 1680, regarding the Darien women: 'the ffemale sort are very beautifull, they are alsoe very loveing and ffree to dispose of themselves to Englishmen'.

Chin are well proportion'd; and in general they are handsomly featur'd, but the Men more than the Women.

Both Sexes have streight, long, black Hair,<sup>1</sup> lank, course and strong, which they wear usually down to the middle of the Back, or lower, hanging loose at its full length; only the Women tie it together with a String just behind the Head, below which it flows loose as the Mens.<sup>2</sup> Both Men and Women pride themselves much in the length of the Hair of the Head; and they frequently part it with their Fingers, to keep it disentangled; or comb it out with a sort of Combs they make of *Macaw*-wood. This Comb is made of several small Sticks, of about 5 or 6 Inches long, and tapering to a point at each end like our Glovers Sticks. These being tied 10 or 12 of them together about the middle where they are thick, the Extremities of them both ways open from each other, and serve at either end for a Comb: which does well enough to part the Hair; but they are forc'd to use their Fingers to fetch the Lice out of their Heads. They take great delight in Combing their Hair, and will do it for an Hour together. All other Hair, except that of their Eye-brows and Eye-lids, they eradicate. For tho' the Men have Beards if they would let them grow, yet they always have them rooted out, and the Women are the Operators for all this Work; using two little Sticks for that purpose, between which they pinch the Hair, and pluck it up. But the Men upon some occasions cut off the Hair even of their Heads, it being a Custom they have to do so by way of Triumph, and as a distinguishing Mark of Honour to him who has kill'd a *Spaniard*, or other Enemy. He also then paints himself black<sup>3</sup> (which is not usual upon any other occasion) continuing

<sup>1</sup> Characteristic of practically all native American tribes. The hair, like that of Orientals, shows a cross-section almost circular—providing the chief argument in favour of an ancient link between Asia and America: generally speaking, the hair of white Europeans is flattened in cross-section; that of Negroes, almost kidney-bean shaped.

<sup>2</sup> Cuna women have now reverted to their former custom of cutting a girl's hair short when she attains puberty.

<sup>3</sup> Black body-paint is usually obtained by Darien folk from *Genipa americana*, but charcoal is also used. Yellow and blue-grey are obtained from earths, and light red from annatto (the 'achiote' of Central America) and from mangrove bark and shoots. See note 2 on p. 22.

painted of this Colour till the first New-moon (as I remember) after the Fact is done.

Their Natural Complexion is a Copper-colour, or Orange-tawney; and their Eye-brows are naturally black as Jet. They use no Art to deepen the Colour either of their Eye-brows, or the Hair of their Head; but they daub it with Oil to make it shine; for like other *Indians* they anoint themselves all over, whether for Beauty to make the Skin smooth and sleek, or to supple it and keep it from parching, or to hinder too much Perspiration in this hot Country, I know not.

There is one Complexion so singular, among a sort of People of this Country, that I never saw nor heard of any like them in any part of the World. The Account will seem strange, but any Privateers<sup>1</sup> who have gone over the *Isthmus* must have seen them, and can attest the main of what I am going to relate; tho' few have had the opportunity of so particular an Information about these People as I have had.

They are White, and there are of them of both Sexes; yet there are but few of them in comparison of the Copper-colour'd, possibly but one to two or three hundred. They differ from the other *Indians* chiefly in respect of Colour, tho' not in that only. Their Skins are not of such a White as those of fair People among *Europeans*, with some tincture of a Blush or Sanguine Complexion; neither yet is their Complexion like that of our paler People, but 'tis rather a Milk-white, lighter than the Colour of any *Europeans*, and much like that of a white Horse.<sup>2</sup>

For there is this further remarkable in them, that their Bodies

<sup>1</sup> Basil Ringrose also observed 'severall women fairer than the fairest European with haire like the finest flax' (Sloane MS. 48).

<sup>2</sup> Recent scientific investigation has proved the accuracy of Wafer's observations and deductions concerning the albinos among the Cuna Indians. In 1925, 8 people from the San Blas Indians were taken to Washington, 5 adults, of the usual light brown colour, and 3 'white' children, 2 boys and a girl. Professor Huxley subsequently said that he considered these albinos as homozygous recessives, the white condition resulting simply from congenital lack of the usual pigmentation. The normal dark colour remains dominant in the race; all whites show similar deviations from normal; and there is no intermediate condition. The albinos have no racial significance; the type remains unaltered. The neighbouring Chocó have no albinos, and they are almost unknown among American Indians generally, except in the case of the Zuni and Hopi folk.

are beset all over, more or less, with a fine short Milk-white Down, which adds to the whiteness of their Skins, for they are not so thick set with this Down, especially on the Cheeks and Forehead, but that the Skin appears distinct from it. The Men would probably have white Bristles for Beards, did they not prevent them by their Custom of plucking the young Beard up by the Roots continually. But for the Down all over their Bodies, they never try to get rid of it. Their Eye-brows are Milk-white also, and so is the Hair of their Heads, and very fine withal, about the length of six or eight Inches, and inclining to a Curl.

They are not so big as the other *Indians*; and what is yet more strange, their Eye-lids bend and open in an oblong Figure, pointing downward at the Corners, and forming an Arch or Figure of a Crescent with the Points downwards. From hence, and from their seeing so clear as they do in a Moon-shiny night, we us'd to call them *Moon-ey'd*.<sup>1</sup> For they see not very well in the Sun, poring in the clearest Day; their Eyes being but weak, and running with Water if the Sun shine towards them; so that in the Day-time they care not to go abroad, unless it be a cloudy dark Day. Besides they are but a weak People in comparison of the other, and not very fit for Hunting or other laborious Exercise, nor do they delight in any such. But notwithstanding their being thus sluggish and dull and restive in the Day-time, yet when Moon-shiny nights come, they are all Life and Activity, running abroad, and into the Woods, skipping about like Wild-Bucks; and running as fast by Moon-light, even in the Gloom and Shade of the Woods, as the other *Indians* by Day, being as nimble as they, tho' not so strong and lusty.

The Copper-colour'd *Indians* seem not to respect these so much as those of their own Complexion, looking on them as somewhat monstrous.<sup>2</sup> They are not a distinct Race by them-

<sup>1</sup> San Blas albinos are often seen with pale blue, dark blue, or hazel eyes; the skin is sometimes spotted with the 'tawny' colour of the normal type; and the hair is not always flaxen, but often auburn or yellow. The Cuna are all short, small people; but the albinos are even smaller than their brown kinsfolk.

<sup>2</sup> The same feeling exists to-day. The albinos are tolerated, although at

selves, but now and then one is bred of a Copper-colour'd Father and Mother; and I have seen a Child of less than a Year old of this sort. Some would be apt to suspect they might be the Off-spring of some *European* Father. But besides that the *Europeans* come little here, and have little Commerce with the *Indian*-women when they do come, these white People are as different from the *Europeans* in some respects, as from the Copper-colour'd *Indians* in others. And besides, where an *European* lies with an *Indian*-woman, the Child is always a *Mostese*, or Tawney, as is well known to all who have been in the *West-Indies*; where there are *Mostesa's*, *Mulatto's*, &c. of several Gradations between the White, and the Black or Copper-colour'd, according as the Parents are; even to Decom-pounds, as a *Mulatto-Fina*, the Child of a *Mulatto*-man, and *Mostesa*-women, &c.

But neither is the Child of a Man and Woman of these white *Indians*, white like the *Parents*, but Copper-colour'd as *their* Parents were. For so *Lacenta* told me, and gave me this as his Conjecture how these came to be White, That 'twas through the force of the Mother's Imagination, looking on the Moon at the time of Conception; but this I leave others to judge of. He told me withal, that they were but short-liv'd.

Both these and the Copper-colour'd *Indians* use painting their Bodies, even of the Sucking Children sometimes. They make Figures of Birds, Beasts, Men, Trees, or the like, up and down in every part of the Body, more especially the Face, but

one time newly-born 'white' children were killed, a fate averted by the mother if she could keep the child out of sight for some days; this was possible since an expectant woman leaves home and goes into the bush before delivery. Dislike for, and killing of albinos is said still to prevail among the mountain-dwelling *Cuna* of the interior, the 'Bravos' ('wild folk'). In the San Blas islands more tolerance is shown; adult 'white Indians' are not infrequently seen. They are variously calculated to form 2 to 10 per cent. of the population. The Panamanian Intendente of San Blas recently estimated the island population at 20,000 to 25,000, with about 138 albinos; the island of Aligandi, with 1,250 people, had 12 albinos. 'White' male adults are not allowed to marry; albino girls may marry, but are not at all admired. In no case would a 'white' girl be allowed to choose a 'white' husband. Since sexual promiscuity is practically non-existent among the *Cuna*, it follows that albino children are always the offspring of browns or of a brown father and 'white' mother.

the Figures are not extraordinary like what they represent, and are of differing Dimensions, as their Fancies lead them.

The Women are the Painters, and take a great delight in it. The Colours they like and use most are Red, Yellow and Blue, very bright and lovely. They temper them with some kind of Oil, and keep them in Calabashes for use; and ordinarily lay them on the Surface of the Skin with Pencils of Wood, gnaw'd at the end to the softness of a Brush. So laid on, they will last some Weeks, and are renew'd continually. This way they painted me.

But finer Figures, especially by their greater Artists, are imprinted deeper, after this manner. They first with the Brush and Colour make a rough Draught of the Figure they design; then they prick all over with a sharp Thorn till the Blood gushes out; then they rub the place with their Hands, first dipp'd in the Colour they design; and the Picture so made is indelible. But scarce one in forty of them is painted this way.

One of my Companions desired me once to get out of his Cheek one of these imprinted Pictures, which was made by the *Negroes*, his Name was *Bullman*; which yet I could not effectually do, after much scarifying and fetching off a great part of the Skin. The Men, when they go to War, paint the Faces all over with Red; and the Shouldiers, Breast, and the rest of the Bodies, here with Black, and there with Yellow, or any other Colour at pleasure, in large Spots; all which they wash off at Night in the River before they go to sleep.

They wear no Cloaths, ordinarily; but only the Women have a Clout or piece of Cloth about their middle, tied behind with a Thread, and hanging down to their Knees; or Ankles, if they can get one large enough. They make these of Cotton; but sometimes they meet with some old Cloaths got by trucking with their Neighbour *Indians* subject to the *Spaniards*; and these they are very proud of. Mr *Dampier* relates how we prevail'd with a morose *Indian*, by presenting his Wife with a Sky-colour'd Petticoat, and nothing will oblige the Women more than to give them Cloaths, especially of Gaudy Colours.

The Men go ordinarily quite naked, without so much as a Clout about them, which few other *Indians* are without. But these have only a small Vessel of Gold or Silver, if they are able,



or at least a piece of Plantain-Leaf, of a Conick Figure, like the Extinguisher of a Candle. They forceably bear back the *Penis* within its own Tegument, close to the *Pubes*; and they keep it there with this Funnel tied hard upon it, with a String coming from it, and going about their Waists. They leave the *Scrotum* expos'd, having no Sense of Shame with reference to that, as they have with respect to the *Penis*, which they never shew uncover'd. But the Men will turn away their Faces even from one another, if by accident it be uncovered; and when they would make Water, they turn their Backs to their Companions, and squatting down, slip off the Funnel with one Hand, and having done, put it on again very nimbly. When they would go to Stool, they choose always to go into the River, both Men and Women; having a great Sense of Shame as to that particular. And in general, they are both a modest and a cleanly People.

Yet the Men also have a value for Cloaths; and if any of them had an old Shirt given him by any of us, he would be sure to wear it, and strut about at no ordinary rate.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, they have a sort of long Cotton Garments of their own, some white, others of a rusty black, shap'd like our Carter's Frocks, hanging down to their Heels, with a Fringe of the same of Cotton about a Span long, and short, wide, open Sleeves, reaching but to the middle of their Arms. These Garments they put on over their Heads, but they are worn only on some great Occasions, as attending the King or Chief, either at a Feast, a Wedding especially; or sitting in Council, or the like. They don't march in them, but the Women carry these and their other Ornaments

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Rose, a member of the first expedition of the 'Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies', recorded in his Journal dated from Darien in October, 1698, that 'Captain Andreas' (who remembered cordially his association and adventures in 1681 with the English buccaneers), was a man of small stature, garbed like a Spaniard, and resembling a Spaniard 'in the gravity of his carriage', wore on his visit to the company's ship at Golden Island 'a loose red stuff coat, old hat, pair of white drawers, and no shoes nor stockens'. The Scots gave Andreas a new hat 'braded with broad gold galloo', and he carried a silver-tipped stick given to him by Spaniards in Panama, which he frequently visited. The Chief Ambrosio, living 10 miles inland, and his 20 followers, when receiving the Scots, wore loose white 'frocks', fringed at the hem.

in Baskets after them; which they put on when they come to the Place of Assembly, and there make themselves as fine as they can.<sup>1</sup> When they are thus assembled, they will sometimes walk about the Place or Plantation where they are, with these their Robes on, and I once saw *Lacenta* thus walking about with 2 or 300 of these attending him, as if he was mustering them. And I took notice that those in the black Gowns walk'd before him, and the white after him, each having their Launces of the same colour with their Robes.

For an Ornament to the Face, beside their general painting and daubing their Cheeks with Red when they go to War, the Men wear at all times a piece of Plate hanging over their Mouths, generally of Silver, but the principal Men have it of Gold.<sup>2</sup> 'Tis of an Oval Figure, covering the Mouth from corner to corner; and this is the length of it. It reaches so low as to ly upon the Under-lip with its lowest side; and there is a piece cut out of the upper side, near the Extremity of it; which Edge being cut asunder, the whole Plate is like the Figure of a Half-moon, only inclining more to an Oval; and gently pinching the Bridle of the Nose with its Points, it hangs dangling from thence. It is in the middle of about the thickness of a Guinea; but grows thinner gradually towards the Edge. The Plates of this size are such as they use when they go to a Feast or Council, but that which they wear abroad upon a long March, Hunting,

<sup>1</sup> Dampier in Sloane MS. 3236 quotes 'Mr. De la Wafer' as saying: 'The men never stir abroad without their Armes which is a Bow and Sheafe of arrows, a small hatchett and a Matcheate wherewith they cleave a small Path which way soever they goe the Country being all woodes. When they will appear in State or walke to visit their freinds the men weare 20 or 30 lb. waight of wild beasts (A) tooth and shells of fish about their neck sometimes 40: 50: or 60 lb. waight which is the greatest ornament that they have but none dare weare soe many as the King'.

(A) MS. side-note in another writing: 'These teeth are only worn when they apear in state'. Or, perhaps, when hunting, for these teeth may lend a magic power, when assumed to the accompaniment of specific songs.

<sup>2</sup> These ornaments have been historically recorded for more than 400 years as peculiar to the Cuna Indians of Darien (the Chocó, living within a few miles of the Cuna, have never adopted nose-ornaments). Enciso, an eyewitness of the earliest Spanish settlements on the isthmus, described them in the *Suma de Geografia*. Specimens of these and other Cuna ornaments and dress are to be seen in the British Museum.

or at ordinary times, is of the same Shape, but much smaller, and does not cover their Lips. Such an one I wore among them of Gold.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of this Plate, the Women wear a Ring hanging down in the same manner; and the Metal and Size also differing according to their Rank, and the Occasion. The larger sort is of the thickness of a Goose-quill; and not Oval, as the Mens Plates, but Circular. It goes through the Bridle of the Nose; which many times, by its weight and long use, especially in Elder Women, it brings down to the Mouth.

Both Men and Women, at solemn Meals or Feasts, when they wear their larger Plates or Rings, take them out, and lay them aside till they have done Eating; when rubbing them very clean and bright, they put them in again. At other times, when they eat or drink, they content themselves with lifting up with the left Hand, if need be, the small Plates or Rings they then wear, (and the Womens Rings are seldom so small but they lie upon the Lips) while they use their right Hand in taking up the Cup or feeding themselves. And by the way, they always make the chief use of their Right Hands, and I never perceiv'd a Left-handed Person among them. Neither the Plates nor Rings hinder much their Speaking, tho' they lie bobbing upon their Lips.

The King or Chief, and some few of the great ones, at extraordinary times, wear in each Ear, fastned to a Ring there, two large Gold Plates, one hanging before to the Breast, and the other behind on the Shoulder. They are about a Span long, of an Heart fashion (as that is commonly painted) with the Point downward; having on the upper part a narrow Plate or Label, about three or four Inches long, by an hole in which it hangs to the Ring in the Ear. It wears great holes in the Ears by frequent use.

I once saw *Lacenta*, in a great Council, wear a Diadem of Gold-plate, like a Band about his Head, eight or nine Inches broad, jagged at top like the Teeth of a Saw, and lined on the inside with a Net-work of small Canes. And all the armed Men,

<sup>1</sup> The Cuna probably never had any great store of gold; certainly not after the rapacity of the early 'conquistadores' from Spain proved the danger of possessing or displaying many gold ornaments. But the use of the

who then attended him in Council, wore on their Heads such a Band, but like a Basket of Canes, and so jagged, wrought fine, and painted very handsomely, for the most part red; but not cover'd over with a Gold-plate as *Lacenta's* was.<sup>1</sup> The top of these was set round with long Feathers, of several of the most beautiful Birds, stuck upright in a Ring or Crown. But *Lacenta* had no Feathers on his Diadem.

Beside these particular Ornaments there are yet other general ones, which they all wear, Men, Women, and Children of seven or eight Years old, in proportion to their Age. These are several Strings or Chains of Teeth, Shells, Beads, or the like, hanging from the Neck down upon the Breast, and to the pit of the Stomach. The Teeth-chains are curiously made with Teeth jagged like a Saw in several Rows, so contriv'd as that the Prominencies of the one Row may lie in the Notches of the other, and look like one solid Mass of Bone. This was worn only by *Lacenta*, and some few of the principal Men, on particular Occasions; and they put them on over the rest of their Beads. We us'd to call these, Tygers-teeth, though I know not for what Reason; for I never saw any such Creature there.<sup>2</sup> Yet I have been inform'd there are Tygers on this Continent. Some of our Men who cross'd the *Isthmus*, told me, they kill'd one there; and at another time, when we went over with Capt.

nose-ring has survived; Cuna men in touch with foreigners frequently appear without it, but to women it is indispensable. Father Gassó tried to persuade the Nargana folk to give up putting the nose-ornament on baby girls during his mission of 1907-15 (see Appendix IV); but the islanders clung obstinately to the custom. Their admiration for skill in making such ornaments was instrumental in eventually inducing them to admit to the island a lay brother, on account of his accomplishments as a metal worker.

<sup>1</sup> 'King Golden Capp with his nobillity gave us a very kind reception . . . Ye King's garb was a long white Cotton Coate fringed all round the bottom, about his neck a belt of Tiger's teeth, and on his head a Hatt, ye major part was of beaten Gold and in his nose a Ring of gold with a flatt Plate of ye same, much like a Cockle Shell, which is usuall for these people to weare'. (John Cox his Travills'. Sloane MS. 49.)

<sup>2</sup> The true tiger does not live in the New World. The (smaller) American 'tigers' are the ocelot (from the Nahuatl 'ocelotl') and the jaguar. The habitat of these great cats is any wooded region of the tropical belt. The puma is the lion of the New World.

*Sharp*, some of the Men said they saw a Tyger, who stood at a small distance, and star'd upon them. I have heard also that there is a small sort, but very fierce, in the Bay of *Campechy*.

But for the rest of them, both Men and Women, they wear not any Teeth, but only a few scattering sometimes here and there in the Chains, among the rest of the Baubles. Each of them has, it may be, about the Neck 3 or 400 Strings of Beads, Shells, or the like, but these divided into 7 or 8 Ranks; and the Strings of each, by being turn'd a little about one another, make, as it were, so many Ropes of them. These hang usually one below another, yet in no great order; and the Women generally have theirs hanging all on a Heap or Cluster. Whatever Bugles or other such Toys they get, they find a place for them among their Chains; which the heavier they be, the more ornamental. She is a poor Woman who has not fifteen or twenty Pound weight upon her; some have thirty or more; and the Men have commonly near twice as much in weight as the Women, according as their Strength is, and their Ability to compass them.<sup>1</sup>

When they are in the House, or on Hunting, or going to War, they wear none of these Chains; but only when they would appear in State, upon occasion of a Feast, Wedding, Council, or the like. As they go to the place of Rendezvous, the Women carry them for them, as they do their other Trinkets, in Baskets; one at each end of a Pole laid across the Shoulder. When they come to the place, they put them on, and walk about; and sometimes will dance in them; till with the Motion and Weight they Sweat extreemly. When they sit down to eat, they take them off till they have done.

The Children have only a few small Chains; and a

<sup>1</sup> The 'bugles' (Lat. 'bugulus' an ornament) worn by Cuna Indians, which Wafer saw, did not necessarily include the long, usually black, glass beads of commerce. Necklaces from Darien, even to-day, are usually composed entirely of native materials, such as the teeth of monkeys, ocelots, or fish; small bones of animals; or certain hard seeds. Many of these necklaces are more than ornaments; the component parts possess magic power, are worn in connexion with hunting, fishing, planting or other ceremonies, and are efficacious only when certain songs are sung. These songs are usually known only to the *kantules* or their assistant *kansuetis*, and may be couched in a 'secret language'.

String or two of Beads or Bugles they will put upon their very Infants. And the Women, besides these Chains, have sometimes Bracelets about their Arms, of a small quantity of the same Materials twisted several times about. Both Men and Women, when painted, and set out with all these Fineries, make no ordinary Figure.

Their Houses lie mostly thin and scattering, especially in New Plantations, and always by a River-side. But in some Places there are a pretty many together, so as to make a Town or Village, yet not standing close or orderly, in Rows or Streets, but dispers'd here and there, like our Villages on Commons, or in Woodlands. They have Plantations lying about them, some at a nearer, others at a greater distance; reserving still a Place to build the common War-house on.<sup>1</sup> They change not their Seats or Houses, unless either for fear of the Neighbouring *Spaniards*, if they think them too much acquainted with the place of their Abode; or to mend their Commons, when the Ground is worn out of Heart; for they never manure not.

In building, they lay no Foundations, only dig Holes two or three Feet asunder; in which they set small Posts upright, of an equal heighth, of 6, 7, or 8 Foot high. The Walls are walled up with Sticks, and daub'd over with Earth, and from these Walls the Roof runs up in small Rafter, meeting in a Ridge, and cover'd with Leaves of some Trees of the Palm kind.

The Building is all irregular. The Length is about 24 or 25 Foot; the Breadth proportionable. There is no Chimney, but the Fire is made in the middle of the House, on the Ground; the Smoke going out at a hole on the top, or at Crevices in the Thatch. The House is not so much parted into Rooms, as all of it a Cluster of Hovels, joining together into one House. No Stories, no Doors, nor Shelves; nor other Seats, than Logs of

<sup>1</sup> The Cuna do not now maintain 'war-houses', i.e. establishments where young unmarried men are trained to arms and taught the obligations of manhood, as among the Zulu and Masai of former generations. The big house which Wafer saw in each village was probably that of the *sagila*, the chief of the clan, where it was and still is usual for the community to assemble at night for conferences; and where all the female members of the family, with their husbands and children, dwell. The social system of the Cuna, if not strictly matrilineal to-day, has obviously developed from a strong 'mother-right' basis towards more patrilineal customs.

Wood. Every one of the Family has a Hammock tied up, hanging from end to end of the Hovel or Room.

Several Houses in a Village or Neighbourhood, have one War-house or Fort in common to them; which is generally at least 120 or 130 Foot long, about 25 broad, the Wall about 9 or 10 Foot high; and in all to the top of the Ridge about 20 Foot; and cover'd with Leaves as their other Houses. The Materials and Method of Building are also much the same as in the other Houses; but there are no Partitions. The sides and Ends of these War-houses are full of Holes, each about as wide as ones Fist; but made here and there at Random, in no regular Figure or Order.<sup>1</sup> Out of these they view an approaching Enemy, and shoot their Arrows. They have no way of flanking an Enemy. These Houses are always seated on a Level, on the Nap or Edge of a gentle Hill; and they clear the Coast of Woods and Shrubs, for a Bows-shoot quite round it. There is a Door-way at each end; and to Barricado it, a sort of Door made of *Macaw*-wood and Bamboes, both split and bound together with Withs; 'tis about a Foot thick. This they have ready to set up against an Enemies entrance; and two or three Posts in the Ground to support it. 'Tis a great Inconvenience of these Forts that they are easily set a Fire; and the *Spaniards* shoot into the Thatch Arrows with long Shanks made red hot, for that purpose. There is usually a Family of *Indians* living in the War-house, as a Guard to it, and to keep it clean, and they are always kept pretty neat, as their private Houses also are. The War-houses serve them also to hold their Councils, or other general Meetings.

In the Plantations, among their Houses, they set so much of Plantains, Maiz, or the like, as serves their Occasions. The Country being all a Forest, the first thing of their Husbandry is usually to cut down the Trees, and clear a piece of Ground. They often let the Trees lie along on the Place 3 or 4 Years after they are cut down; and then set fire to them and the Underwood or Stumps, burning all together. Yet in the mean time they plant Maiz among the Trees as they lie. So much of the Roots

<sup>1</sup> If Wafer is correct in saying that in his day the Darien Indians built forts, the idea was probably due to hostilities with the Spaniards, and the building-plan adapted from that of Spanish forts. But see previous note.

of the Trees as are under Ground, they suffer to lie there and rot, having no way to grub them up. When the Ground is pretty clear, they how it up into little Ridges and Hillocks; but in no very good Form nor regular Distance. In each of these Hillocks they make a hole with their Fingers, and throw in 2 or 3 Grains of Maiz, as we do Garden-beans; covering it up with Earth. The Seed-time is about *April*; the Harvest about *September* or *October*. They pluck off the Ears of the Maiz with their Hands, as is usual also elsewhere. And tho' I was not there in their Harvest-time, yet I saw the Maiz of the preceding Harvest laid up in the Husk in their Houses.<sup>1</sup> Instead of Threshing, they rub off the Grain. They make no Bread of it, nor Cakes, but use the Flower on many Occasions; parching the Corn, and grinding it between two Stones, as Chocolate is made. One use they put the Flower to is to mix it with Water in a Calabash, and so drink it off; which they do frequently when they Travel, and have not leisure to get other Provisions. This mixture they call *Chicha*, which I think signifies Maiz.<sup>2</sup>

They make a Drink also of their Maiz, which they call *Chichah Co-pah*; for *Co-pah* signifies Drink. They steep in a Trough of Water a quantity of Maiz bruised, about 20 or 30 Bushels, if it be against a Feast or Wedding; letting it lie so long till the Water is impregnated with the Corn, and begins to turn sour. Then the Women, usually some old Women, who have little else to do, come together, and chew Grains of Maiz in their Mouths, which they spit out each into a Gourd or Calabash: And when they think they have a sufficient quantity of this Spittle and Maiz in the Calabashes, they empty them into the Trough of Water, after having first taken out the Maiz that was infus'd in it; and this serves instead of Barm or Yeast, setting all the Trough of Liquor in a small Ferment. When it has done working, they draw it off clean from the Sediment into another Trough, and then 'tis ready for use. It tastes like sour

<sup>1</sup> In nets, hung from the rafters, to keep it safe from ants, rats, and other marauders.

<sup>2</sup> *Chicha*, or a word resembling it, was and is used all over Isthmian regions, and beyond, to signify a fermented drink; it may have been applied originally to maize-beer only, but is used to-day for intoxicating drinks made from many other fruits and berries. Fresh maize is *oba* in Cuna.



small Beer, yet 'tis very intoxicating. They drink large Quantities of it,<sup>1</sup> and are very fond of it. It makes them belch very much. This is their choice Drink; for ordinarily they drink plain Water or *Mislaw*.

*Mislaw* is a Drink made of ripe Plantains. There is of two sorts, one made of Plantains fresh-gather'd, the other of dry ones. The former they roast in its Cod, which peeling off, they put the Plantain into a Calabash of Water, and mash it with their Hands, till 'tis all dissolved; and then they drink it up with the Water. The other is made of Cakes or Lumps of Plantain dried; for the Plantains when ripe and gather'd will not keep, but quickly grow rotten if left in the Cod. To preserve them therefore, they make a Mass of the Pulp of a great many ripe Plantains, which they dry with a gentle Fire upon a Barbecue or Grate of Sticks, made like a Grid-iron. This Lump they keep for use, breaking off a piece of it when they please, and mashing it in Water for *Mislaw*. They carry a Lump of Plantain with them for this end whenever they travel; especially into Places where they can't hope to get ripe Plantains, tho' they prefer the dried ones. Green and half-ripe ones they eat instead of Bread with Flesh; but they boil them first. They do the same with their Yams and Potato's, which they sometimes roast; as also the Cassava-root. And their Plantations are never without some or other of these, and usually in good plenty; especially the old Plantations.

I saw no Herbs or Sallading in their Plantations, neither did I ever see them eat any kind of Herbs. But they never forget to have in their Plantations some of their beloved Pepper;<sup>2</sup> and they usually are pretty well stor'd with Pine-Apples, which they have very plentiful, and eat of them every Day.

The Men first clear the Plantations, and bring them into order, but the Women have all the trouble of them afterwards; the digging, howing, planting, plucking the Maiz, and setting

<sup>1</sup> Intoxicants are only used at the ceremonial feasts appointed by the chief.

<sup>2</sup> Peppers (capsicums) are not only used constantly with food, but have magic properties in averting the attacks of demons. Neither the puckish *nia* or the disease-bearing *poni* will approach when capsicums are used as a fumigant; for this reason a Cuna often burns dried pepper at the prow of his canoe.

Yams, and every thing of Husbandry, is left to them, but only the cutting down Trees, or such Work that requires greater Strength. The Women also have the managing Affairs within Doors, for they are in general the Drudges of the Family; especially the old Women, for such Works as they are able to do, as Cooking, Washing, and the like. And abroad also the Women are to attend their Husbands, and do all their Servile Work. Nay, they are little better than their Pack-horses, carrying all the Luggage of their Houshold-Utensils, Victuals, &c. and when they come to the place where they are to lodge, the Wife dresses Supper, while the Man hangs up the Hammocks; for each of them lies in their own Hammock.<sup>1</sup>

But notwithstanding the Women are put thus to all manner of Drudgery about the House and Plantations, and in Travelling abroad, and are little better than Slaves to their Husbands; yet they do their Work so readily and cheerfully, that it appears to be rather their own Choice than any Necessity laid upon them. They are in general very good condition'd, pitiful and courteous to one another, but especially to Strangers; ready to give any just attendance or assistance they can. They observe their Husbands with a profound Respect and Duty upon all occasions; and on the other side their Husbands are very kind and loving to them. I never knew an *Indian* beat his Wife, or give her any hard Words. Nor even in the Quarrels which they are wont to have in their Cups, do they shew any Roughness toward their Women who attend them.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these Cares, the Women have that which more immediately belongs to them, the Care of their Children. When a Woman is deliver'd of a Child, another Woman takes it in her Arms within half an hour or less after 'tis born, and takes the lying-in Woman upon her Back, and goes with both of them into the River and washes them there. The Child for the first Month is tied upon a Board, or piece of *Macaw*-wood

<sup>1</sup> 'Hammock', from a Cuban word spelt by Spaniards 'hamaca', had been in general use among Europeans in the NewWorld since the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the Cuna name is *cachi*.

<sup>2</sup> Gassó, 250 years after Wafer, comments on the domestic peace of the Cuna folk: quarrels and unkindness are almost unknown, and the Chief, who possesses no police nor military forces, is always obeyed.

split (for that serves them usually for Boards, having no Saws) and this piece of Wood is swathed to the Back of the Child; and their Children generally grow very streight. When there is occasion to clean the Child, they take it off from the Board, and wash it with cold Water; and then swath it on again. The Mother takes up the Child to give it Suck, Board and all, and lays it down again in a little Hammock made for that purpose; the upper part of which is kept open with short Sticks.

As the Children grow up, the Boys are bred to their Fathers Exercises; especially shooting with the Bow and Arrow, and throwing the Lance; at both which they are very expert. I have seen Things perform'd by them with a Dexterity almost incredible. For Instance, a little Boy of about eight Years old, would set a Cane up on end, and going about twenty Paces from it, would split it with a Bow and Arrow, and not miss once in several Essays. This I have seen, and this is the chief of their Exercise. And as they generally accompany their Fathers on Hunting, (especially when about 10 or 12 years old, and big enough to carry their own Provision, and a Calabash of Corn-drink) so they will shoot little Birds they meet with, and strike in with the Hunt. Their young Children they never carry abroad with them on a Journey, or on a hunting or fighting Expedition. The Boys, when grown somewhat big, always go abroad with the Father and Mother, and do what little Services they can; but the Girls stay at home with the old Women.

They seem very fond of their Children, both Fathers and Mothers, and I have scarce seen them use any Severity towards them. And the Children are suffer'd to divert themselves which way they will. Swimming in the Rivers and catching Fish, is a great Exercise even for the small Boys and Girls; and the Parents also use that Refreshment. They go quite naked, both Boys and Girls, till the Age of Puberty; when the Girls put on their Clout, and the Boys the Funnel.

The Girls are bred up by their Mothers to their Domestick Employments. They make them help to dress the Victuals, and set them to draw Strings out of *Maho*-bark, and to beat *Silk*-grass, for Thread, Cordage, and Nets. They pick the Cotton also, and spin it for their Mothers Weaving. For Weaving, the Women make a Roller of Wood, about three Foot long,

turning easily about between two Posts. About this they place Strings of Cotton, of 3 or 4 yards long, at most, but oftner less, according to the use the Cloth is to be put to, whether for a Hammock, or to tie about their Waists, or for Gowns, or for Blankets to cover them in their Hammocks, as they lie in them in their Houses; which are all the Uses they have for Cloth. And they never weave a piece of Cotton with a design to cut it, but of a size that shall just serve for the particular use. The Threads thus coming from the Roller are the Warp; and for the Woof, they twist Cotton-yarn about a small piece of *Macaw*-wood, notch'd at each end; and taking up every other Thread of the Warp with the Fingers of one Hand, they put the Woof through with the other Hand, and receive it out on the other side. And to make the Threads of the Woof lie close in the Cloth, they strike them at every turn with a long and thin piece of *Macaw*-wood like a Ruler, which lies across between the Threads of the Warp for that purpose.

The Girls also twist Cotton-yarn for Fringes, and prepare Canes, Reeds or Palmeto-Leaves, as the Boys also do, for Basket-making. But the making up the Baskets is the Mens Work; who first die the Materials of several curious lively Colours, and then mix and weave them very prettily. They weave little Baskets like Cups also very neat; with the Twigs wrought so very fine and close, as to hold any Liquor, without any more ado, having no Lacker or Varnish. And they as ordinarily drink out of these woven Cups, as out of their Calabashes, which they paint very curiously. They make Baskets of several sizes, for carrying their Cloths, or other uses, with great variety of Work; and so firm, that you may crush them or throw them about, how you will almost, with little or no damage to them.

The young Maids are shut up in private by their Parents at the time of Puberty, and will not be seen by any, but put a piece of Cotton as a Vail over their Faces, if any one should come accidentally into the Place where they are, tho' it be their Father. This Confinement lasts not long, but they soon go abroad again.<sup>1</sup> They are very modest; and tho' they will lay hold on

<sup>1</sup> The puberty ceremonies for girls last one week. A special little hut is erected within the family house, within which the girl remains. Her hair,

any part of a Man, yet they do it with great Simplicity and Innocence.

*Lacenta* had several Wives, as others of them also had. *Lacenta's* were Seven in number. When he went a Progress or long Journey, 'twas so contriv'd, that he still found one of his Wives at every new Stage he came to.<sup>1</sup>

Adultery is punished among them with the Death of both Parties. Yet if the Woman confesses the Fact to her Husband, and swears she was forc'd, she finds Favour. But if she conceals it, and it be prov'd against her, she is burn'd. Their Laws are severe also in other respects; for a Thief dies without Mercy.

If a Man debauches a Virgin, they thrust a sort of Bryer up the passage of his *Penis*, and then turn it round ten or a dozen times, which is not only a great torment, but commonly mortifies the part; and the Person dies of it; but he has liberty to cure himself if he can. These Facts must be proved by Oath; which is by their Tooth.

When they marry, the Father of the Bride, or the next Man of Kin, keeps her privately in the same Apartment with himself the first seven Nights;<sup>2</sup> whether to express an unwillingness to part with her, or for what other Reason I know not; and she is then deliver'd to her Husband.<sup>3</sup>

hitherto allowed to grow to its natural length, is cut, or burnt, short; and she is ceremonially bathed by elder women, and painted with prescribed materials.

A first-class feast is proclaimed by the *sagila* of the clan for the occasion. The ceremonially-shortened hair of the girl is kept, according to the song obtained by F. Densmore from San Blas Indians in 1924:

'The girl will take the packet of hair to her new house;  
She will tie it up close to the rafters.  
Sometimes she will look up and see it there  
When she has lived a long time in that house.'

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Rose, in 1698, wrote that 'Captain Andreas', the Indian Chief who visited the Scots' vessel at Golden Island, came on board the second time 'with his travelling wife, having in all four'. Monogamy is usual to-day.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the father of the girl, or head of the clan, was held responsible for her defloration, perhaps by artificial means, as preparation for marriage. Similar customs prevail among several native American tribes; the taking of a girl's virginity is regarded with superstitious fear, and the operation is relegated, frequently, to the head-man, who is generally also the chief magician, and is therefore able to avert any evil consequences.

<sup>3</sup> The young bridegroom has little choice in the matter: he is selected by

When a Man disposes of his Daughter, he invites all the *Indians* within 20 Miles round to a great Feast, which he provides for them. The Men who come to the Wedding bring their Axes along with them, to work with. The Women bring about half a Bushel of Maiz. The Boys bring Fruit and Roots, the Girls Fowls and Eggs; for none come empty-handed. They set their Presents at the door of the House, and go away again, till all the rest of the Guests have brought theirs; which are all receiv'd in, and dispos'd of by the People of the House.

Then the Men return first to the Wedding, and the Bridegroom presents each Man with a Calabash of strong Drink, and conducts them through the House one by one, into some open place behind it. The Women come next, who likewise receive a Calabash of Liquor, and march through the House. Then come the Boys, and last of all the Girls; who all drink at the Door, and go after the rest.

Then come the Fathers of the young Couple, with their Son and Daughter. The Father of the Bridegroom leads his Son, and the Father of the Bride leads his Daughter. The former makes a Speech to the Company; and then dances about, with many Antick Gestures, till he is all on a Sweat. Then kneeling down he gives his Son to the Bride; whose Father is kneeling also and holds her, having danc'd himself into a Sweat, as the other. Then the young Couple take each other by the Hand, and the Bridegroom returns the Bride to her Father; and thus ends the Ceremony.

Then all the Men take up their Axes, and run shouting and hollowing to a Tract of Woodland, which is before laid out for

the parents of the marriageable girl, after consultation with his own parents; and on the first day of the wedding ceremonies he is forcibly taken and put into a hammock where the maiden has already been placed. This ritual is repeated for two more nights, and cannot be evaded. But if the husband-elect has no mind for matrimony, or inclination to the particular girl, he may leave the ceremonial hammock and refuse the duties of a son-in-law to her parents. If, however, the boy exercises this right, he incurs all-round displeasure, and it is better for him if he leaves the locality. His best, and favourite, means of escape from an uncomfortable situation is to seek service aboard a foreign vessel. Many of the San Blas (*Cuna*) *Indians* who have travelled far abroad and learnt foreign tongues have originally left home on this account.

a Plantation for the young Couple. There they fall to work, cutting down the Woods, and clearing the Ground as fast as they can. Thus they continue about Seven Days, working with the greatest Vigour imaginable, and all the Ground which they clear, the Women and Children plant with Maiz, or whatever else is agreeable to the Season. They also build a House for the new-married Couple to live in.

The Seven Days being ended, and the young Man settled with his Wife in his new House, the Company make merry there with *Chicha-Co-pah*, the Corn-drink before describ'd, of which they are sure to provide good store. They also make Provision for Feasting; and the Guests fall to very heartily.

When their Eating is over, the Men fall to hard Drinking. But before they begin, the Bridegroom takes all their Arms, and hangs them to the Ridge-pole of the House, where none can come at them but himself, for they are very quarrelsome in their Drink. They continue drinking Night and Day, till all the Liquor is spent; which lasts usually 3 or 4 Days. During which some are always drinking, while others are drunk and sleeping. And when all the Drink is out, and they have recover'd their Senses, they all return to their own Homes.

They have Feasting on other Occasions also, as after a great Council held, or any other Meeting; which they have sometimes only for Merriment. The Men constantly drink to one another at Meals, speaking some Word, and reaching out the Cup towards the Person they drink to. They never drink to their Women; but these constantly stand by and attend them while they are eating, take the Cup of any one who has drank, throw out the remainder of the Liquor, rinse it, and give it full to another. The Women at all Feasts, and in their own Houses, wait on their Husbands till they have done; and then go and Eat by themselves, or with one another.<sup>1</sup>

The Men, when they are at home, trouble themselves little with any Business; but that they may not be quite idle, they

<sup>1</sup> Don Narciso Garay records a drinking-song, obtained (1930) in the San Blas islands, and says that 'until the last day of a feast, women and men dance, sing and drink in separate groups; but finally divert themselves together in a kind of spiritual communion'. The song 'Nog igala' begins, and 'Kalis igala' ends, this drinking-feast, Garay says.

will often be making their Cups and Baskets, Arrows and Heads for them, Lances, Nets, and the like.

The Men make also a sort of Pipes of small hollow Bamboes, and sometimes of a single Reed. They cut Notches in it, and blow it strongly, making a whining Noise, but without any distinct Notes, and they frequently entertain themselves with such Instruments, as they us'd in their *Pawawing*. They will do any thing to make a Noise, which they love much; and they keep every one a Humming at the same time to themselves.<sup>1</sup>

They Hum also when they Dance, which they do many times 30 or 40 in a ring, Men only together. They stretch out their Hands, laying them on one anothers Shoulders. Then they move gently sideways round in the same Circle; and shake all the Joints of their Bodies with a wrigling Antick Gesture, as they move along the Ring.

They pipe and drum often, even at working times; but their dancing they use chiefly when they get together to make merry. When they have danc'd some time, one or other of the Company goes out of the Ring, jumps about, and plays Antick

<sup>1</sup> The Cuna musicians (kantules) use flutes and pan-pipes made of a special reed; and whistles formed from the bones of the pelican or of the king-buzzard (mulá); horns of conch-shell are blown as signals only, to announce, for example, the return of a man who has been on a journey, or to indicate the position of a hunter when separated from his companions. No drums are now used by the Cuna, although the Choco, nearby, possess them. Garay explains that pipes and flutes are 'male' and 'female' (*macho* and *hembra*, in Spanish) the 'male', low-pitched pipe of only two notes acting as accompaniment to the higher, dominant tune of the wider-ranged 'female'. Cuna songs are generally cheerful, concerned with turtle-fishing, hunting in the woods, or canoe-racing. Usually, only the official musician and his assistants know these traditional songs, frequently varied as regards words, and often couched in symbolical phrases so that the meaning is obscured and a translator may easily be misled. Laymen sometimes acquire a song, paying a considerable sum to the kantule for the privilege, since songs may have a magical influence. The chant used before seeking turtle describes the origin of turtles, and is sung in conjunction with the use of special objects; others sung before hunting or the felling of certain trees, or search for herbs, must relate the origin of the animal or the plants sought, otherwise no success would be achieved. Songs of deep magical power are probably never taught to laymen, as for instance those used by head-doctors to induce good spirits to enter the little wooden figurines which restore the souls of the sick.



Tricks, throwing and catching his Lance, bending back towards the Ground and springing forward again, with many other Motions like our Tumblers; but with more Activity than Art. And when one is tired with his Tricks, another steps out, and sometimes 2 or 3 together. As soon as ever 'tis over, they jump into the River, all in a violent Sweat as they are, and there wash themselves clean; and when they come out of the Water, they stroke it off from their Hair and Bodies with their Hands. A Dancing-bout, if the meeting be large, lasts sometimes a whole Day, seldom less than 5 or 6 Hours; and 'tis usually after having a short drinking Bout. But they dont dance after they have drank very hard.<sup>1</sup>

These, and the huntings and shooting at a Mark, are their chief Divertisements; for both Men and Boys will be letting fly at any thing they see, tho' for nothing but exercise or trial of Skill. The Women have Dancings and Merriments by themselves, when their Husbands Pastimes are over; for they never feast nor play together with the Men. But they will drink by themselves till they are fuddled.

The Women take great care of their Husbands when they have made themselves drunk. For when they perceive him in such a Condition that he can bear up no longer, they get one or two more Women to assist them to take him up, and put him into his Hammock; where as he lies Snoring they stand by and sprinkle Water on his Body to cool him, washing his Hands, Feet and Face; stroking off that Water with their Hands, as it grows warm, and throwing on fresh. I have seen 10 or 12 or more, lying thus in their Hammocks after a Feast, and the Women standing by to look after them.

The Men never stir abroad upon the most ordinary Occasions, if it be but just without the door to make Water, but they take with them some or other of their Weapons, their Bow and Arrow, Lance, Hatchet, or Macheat or Long-knife. Their most frequent Expeditions, in time of Peace, are to go a Hunting. For this is their way of supplying themselves with Flesh; and they go out as often as it fails at home. They sometimes go out a Family or two only by themselves; but they have often larger

<sup>1</sup> The movements of forest animals, such as the agouti, or the tapir, frequently form the inspiration of Cuna dances.

and more solemn Huntings, of a great many in company together. And there is seldom a Council held, or Feast, but there is some Hunting-Match concluded on before they part; and a time set for every one to appear with their several Necessaries, at the general *Rendezvous*.

A Hunting-Expedition lasts sometimes 3 or 4, sometimes 10, 12, 17 or 18 Days, according as they meet with the Game, and as the Course is which they steer to find it. For sometimes they will range to the Borders, to visit or traffick with their Neighbouring *Indians*;<sup>1</sup> and they will hunt all the way as they go and return. They hunt more or less at all Seasons of the Year; never regarding whether their Venison be in Season or not. They take with them one or two Dogs apiece, to beat about; and there go as well Women as Men. When I went with them a Hunting, a young Woman was appointed me to wait on me, and carry my Basket of Provisions.

The Women carry in their Baskets, Plantains, Bonanoes, Yams, Potatoes and Cassava-roots, ready roasted; but in the Woods, among the ruin'd Plantations, they often meet with green Plantains which they dress there, and with these Roots, so that if they go designedly among such Plantations, they carry the less with them.<sup>2</sup> They carry also some parch'd Maiz in Meal or Flower, and some ripe Plantains raw, to make *Mislaw* with. This is all their Provision. Every Woman carries a Calabash; and there are one or two Pipkins among them all. The Men carry Bows and Arrows, and Lances, a Tamahock or little Axe, and a Machete. All go barefoot, and are often scratch'd in the Woods, but matter it not. They hunt *Pecary*, *Warree*, *Quaums*, *Chicaly-Chicalees*, *Corrosou's*, or any other

<sup>1</sup> The Chocó (Emperá or Nonamá tribes) and the Cuna have for centuries exchanged pottery, dye-stuffs, gold-dust and salt; certain poisons used to tip arrows are thus obtained from the Chocó by the Cuna folk, chiefly the mountain 'Bravos' (wild people) living along the banks of the Chucunaque river. This poison, used for the chase and not for war, and to stupefy rather than to kill, is made by the Chocó (and used by them to tip darts from blow-pipes) from trees, as the manzanillo; or from frogs of the *Phyllobates* family.

<sup>2</sup> When a plantation has been abandoned by the owner (crops, not lands, are owned individually) any fruit or other product becomes common property.

Beast or Bird they meet with, except Monkeys and Deer. The Fowls, and what will not be so easily preserv'd, they eat presently. They lodge all Night at any place where they happen to be at Sun-set, so it be near a Brook or River, and on the Nap of a Hill. They hang up their Hammocks between two Trees, and cover themselves with a Plantain-Leaf, for Shelter from Rain, Wind, &c. with a Fire all Night by the Hammock. They never hunt after Sun-set; and begin not again till Sun-rise. Their chief Game are the *Pecary* and *Warree*; neither of which are swift of foot. They go in Drove, often 200 or 300; so that if the *Indians* come upon them unawares, they usually kill some by random Shot among them. But else, they are many times a whole Day without getting any; or so few, considering how many they start, that it seems a great Toil to little purpose. I have seen about 1000 started in a Day, in several Drove, when I was hunting with them; of which we kill'd but two, as I remember. Sometimes when they are shot, they carry away the Arrows quite. When the Beast is tir'd, it will stand at a Bay with the Dogs; which will set him round, lying close, not daring to seize, but snapping at the Buttocks; and when they see their Master behind a Tree ready to shoot, they all withdraw to avoid the Arrow. As soon as an *Indian* hath shot a *Pecary* or *Warree*, he runs in and lances them; then he unbowels them, throwing away the Guts, and cuts them in two across the middle. Then he cuts a piece of Wood sharp at both ends; sticks the forepart of the Beast at one end, and the hinder part at the other. So each laying his Stick across his Shoulder, they go to the Rendezvous, where they appointed the Women to be; after which they carry their Meat home, first Barbecuing it that Night.

When they take a Beast or Bird, they pierce it with the Lances, or shoot Arrows into it, to let out the Blood. Then they quarter it (first cutting off the Head); and if it be a *Pecary* they scald off the Hair with hot Water; if a *Warree*, they flea<sup>1</sup> it. From some of the Birds they strip the Feathers only, from others the Skin also. And this not regularly, while the Carcass is whole, but piece-meal, after they have dismember'd it; especially in their Journeys.

<sup>1</sup> Flay.





If they intend to preserve any, having little Salt, they erect four forked Sticks 8 or 9 Foot asunder, on which they lay two parallel Staves that shall be above a Foot from the Ground, and so make a Barbecue. Across these Staves they lay the pieces of the Beasts or Birds; and spread underneath a few live Coals, to make which they burn a parcel of Wood on purpose; and turn the same pieces, and renew this small Fire for three or four Days, or a Week, till the Meat be as dry as a Chip, or like our smoak'd Beef. This they do abroad if they kill a great many *Pecary, Birds, &c.* and bring the pieces home ready dried. And if there be much of it, the Men help the Women to carry home the Venison. These pieces will keep a great while; and when the Stock is almost out, they go again a hunting. They make a Barbecue at home also, heaping up these dried pieces across, and often putting some Embers underneath, to keep them from giving, or growing musty, in that moist Country. From these pieces they cut off bits for use as they want them.<sup>1</sup>

If they take any parcels of their dried Flesh, or any newly kill'd, they cut it into small pieces, and throw them into the Pipkin; putting into it some of the Roots and green Plantains or Bonano's, or any other Eatable, and a great deal of Pepper; stewing all together by a simmering, gentle Heat, never boiling it. The Vessel stands thus close cover'd for seven or eight Hours, for 'tis set on very early in the Morning, and they stay till all be brought to Pulp or Mash. This is for set Meals; for Plantains and Bonanoes they eat all Day; but this set Meal of Flesh they eat but once, about Mid-day only. The Mash they pour out into a large Earthen Dish or Calabash, setting it on the great Block which is in every House as a Table, sitting round on little Blocks as on Stools. But at great Feasts, for large Companies, they make a great Barbecue 10, 12, or 20 Foot long, or more, as the Company is, and broad proportionably. They spread on it 3 or 4 Breadths of Plantain-leaves for a Table-Cloth. Every one has a Calabash of Water standing by him at his Right Hand, on the Ground. In Eating, they dip the two fore Fingers of the Right Hand, bent hook-wise, and take up therewith out of the Dish, as with a Spoon, as much as they can,

<sup>1</sup> Acosta noted that when the Isthmian Indians caught abundant fish, they smoke-dried sufficient to last for the rest of the year.

stroking it across into their Mouths. At every Mouthful they dip their Fingers into the Calabash of Water by their Side, whether for Cleanliness or Cooling, I know not; for they eat their Meat excessive hot, as well as violently pepper'd. They eat nothing with it as Bread; but when they have a lump of Salt<sup>1</sup> (which is rare) at every three or four Mouthfuls they stroke it over their Tongue, to give a Relish, and then lay it down again.

The *Indians*, when they Travel, guide themselves either by the Sun, when it shines, or by steering towards such a determinate Point, observing the bending of the Trees, according as the Wind is. If they are at a loss this way, they notch the Barks of Trees, to see which side is thickest; which is always the South, or Sunny side; and their way lies generally through Woods. They go also through Swamps, Boggs, Rivers, &c. where there is no sign of a Path, and are often forc'd to turn aside; yet will keep their way pretty direct for several Days together; clearing their way through Thickets with their Macheats, especially if of hollow Bamboes, for there is no getting through without it. They swim over Rivers, Men, Women and Children, without felling Trees as we did there. But down the River they use either their Canoas, or Bark-Logs made of Light-Wood.<sup>2</sup>

When any enquire the Way of them, as we had several times occasion to do in passing and repassing the *Isthmus*, their usual Method of informing them as to the Bearing of the *Place* they enquire after, is by pointing towards it; and as to the *Time* in which they may hope to arrive there, by pointing to some part of the Arc the Sun describes in their Hemisphere: For according as they point higher or lower, either to the East or West of the Meridian, they suggest the time of the Day, Morning or Afternoon, in which you may hope to arrive at

<sup>1</sup> Obtained from the Pacific coast, where the great rise and fall of tides creates extensive salt marshes. Salt, cleaned and prepared for use was an important article of Central American commerce long before the Spanish Conquest, at many points, as San José de Guatemala, and near Realejo, Nicaragua.

<sup>2</sup> The *Cuna* are fine swimmers and excellent water men; they never row a boat when it is possible to sail, traverse the rivers and tangled archipelago of San Blas in almost all weathers, and in long dug-outs make journeys to the mainland as far west as Colón.

the River, Plantations, or whatever 'tis you enquire after. So the middle distance between the Eastern-Limb of the Horizon, and the Meridian, signifies 9 a Clock in the Morning;  $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of the South-west Arc of the Suns Diurnal Course denotes 4 in the Afternoon, &c. If the Time they would intimate be not of Hours but Days, they turn their Faces Southward, and describing with their Hand the Arc of the Suns Diurnal Course from East to West, when they have brought their Hand to point to the Western Horizon, they then bring it to the side of their Head; and laying down their Head on that side upon it, and shutting their Eyes, counterfeit for a moment their being asleep. Then repeating the Motion with their Hand, and the intervening sleeping times, they make you understand that there will be so many sleeping Times or Nights before you arrive at the Place you seek.

I observ'd among them no distinction of Weeks or particular Days; no parting the Day into Hours, or any Portions, otherwise than by this *Pointing*. And when they use this, or any other Sign, yet they speak at the same time, and express their Meaning in their own Language, tho' to *Europeans* who understand it not. They reckon Times past by no Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies, but the Moons. For *Lacenta* speaking of the Havock the *Spaniards* had made to the Westward, intimated 'twas a great many Moons ago.

Their Computation is by Unites and Tens, and Scores, to an Hundred; beyond which I have not heard them reckon. To express a Number above this, they take a Lock of their Hair, little or great, (in proportion to the Number they would intimate) and hold it up in their Hands, sorting it gradually with their Fingers, and shaking it. To express a Thing innumerable, they take up all the Hair on one side of the Head, and shake it.

When we went into the South Seas under Captain *Sharp*, we were in number about 336,<sup>1</sup> as I remember; and a pretty many of the *Indians* of the *Isthmus* bore us Company in our March. They were willing to take an Account of our Number as we march'd; so one of the *Indians* sat in the Path, and having a little heap of Maiz-grains by him, for every Man of ours that pass'd

<sup>1</sup> Actually, 331 white men crossed the Isthmus.



by him he put one Grain into his Basket. When he had thus taken a great part of our Number, one of our Men, in passing by, gave his Basket purposely a Toss, and threw out his Corn, and so spoiled his Account. This seem'd to displease them. Yet one of them got a little before, and sitting close in the Wood, at a small distance from the narrow Path, which we were to pass one by one, he there took our Number in Grains of Maiz. But when he had taken his Account, they were put to it to cast it up. For two or three Days after, in the progress of our March, coming among some of the Southern *Indians*, we saw some 20 or 30 of the graver Men got together, and trying their Skill to compute the Grains in the Basket; which when they had laid upon a Plantain-Leaf, several of them endeavour'd to tell one after another. But when they could tell no further, (the Number, probably, exceeding their Arithmetick) and seem'd to grow very hot, and earnest in their Debates about it; one of them started up, and sorting out a Lock of his Hair with his Fingers, and shaking it, seem'd to intimate the Number to be great and unknown; and so put an end to the Dispute. But one of them came after us, and enquir'd our Number in broken *Spanish*.<sup>1</sup>

Their Cardinal Numbers, *One, Two, Three*, they name thus:

1. *Conjugo*.
2. *Poquah*.
3. *Pauquah*.
4. *Pakequah*.
5. *Eterrah*.
6. *Indricah*.
7. *Coogolah*.
8. *Paukopah*.
9. *Pakekopah*.
10. *Anivego*.
11. *Anivego Conjugo*.

<sup>1</sup> These 'Southern Indians' were probably not Cuna, but Chocó; the latter, living near the Pacific coast, had been more influenced by Spaniards than the more remote mountain-dwelling Cuna. Many Chocó intermarried with Negro folk, were at least nominally Christianized through the efforts of Spanish Churchmen and were sometimes ready to convey information concerning foreigners to Panama City. Some Chocó, until the great rising of 1726, served in the Spanish gold mines.

12. *Anivego Poquah.*  
 13. *Anivego Pauqua, &c.*  
 20. *Toola Boguah.*  
 40. *Toola Guannah.*<sup>1</sup>

And so on to 100.

Under 10 they content themselves with naming the particular Number at once; which they do readily. But at the same time that they name *Anivego*, or 10, they clap together their expanded Hands. And for 11, 12, 13, &c. to 20, they clap together their Hands, and say *Anivego*; and then separating them, they strike in order the Fingers of the left Hand, one by one, with the Fore-finger of the right, saying, *Anivego Conjugo*,

<sup>1</sup> The Cuna tongue has changed little since 1680, as comparison of Wafer's little vocabulary with recent records shows; in fact, the variation between Wafer's version both of numerals and of several words and phrases on following pages, is due chiefly to the impression made upon different ears, or to the spelling by which different non-Cuna folk have expressed the sound heard.

Wafer, 1681. (Writing of mainland Cuna.)	A. Pinart, 1890. (Writing of mainland Cuna.)	J. D. Prince, 1924. (Recording modern Cuna speech used in the San Blas Islands.)
1. conjuco	cuenchique	kwenchakwa
2. poquah	pocua	poqua
3. pauquah	págua	paqua
4. pakequah	paquegua	pakegua
5. eterrah	atále	atale
6. indricah	nericua	nerkwa
7. coogolah	cublegué	kugla
8. paukopah	pabaca	pabaka
9. pakekopah	paquebague	pakebaka
10. anivego	ambegui	ambégi
11. anivego conjuco	ambegui cacá cuenchique	ambegi kaka kwenchakwa
20. toola boguah	tulabuena	tulagwena
40. toola gwannah	tulapocua	tulabogua

As regards the numbers 20 and 40, Wafer's memory deceived him into an exchange: a similar slip was made by General Joaquin Acosta, who collected a brief vocabulary in 1820, and who gives 'cugule' for 8, and 'anvege' for 7; Cullen, writing in 1853, gave 'cugle' for 7, and it is interesting to compare this with Wafer's, Pinart's, and Prince's versions. The speech of the Cuna is not easily heard by European ears: more than one observer mentions the muffled and guttural effect, and has been further baffled by the Cuna habit of telescoping words.

*Anivego Poqua, Anivego Pauqua, &c.* to the Number they would express, if under 20.

When they would express 20, they clap their Hands twice, (once at every 10) and say *Toola Boguah*. *Toola* seems to signify the same with them, as *Score* with us. For 21, they say *Toola boguah Conjugo*; 22, *Toola boguah Poquah, &c.* To express 30, they clap their Hands thrice, and say *Toola boguah Anivego*, (Twenty and Ten); for 31, *Toola boguah Anivego Conjugo*, (Twenty and Eleven), and so on to 40; when again they clap their Hands four times, and say, *Toolaguannah*, implying another Score; 41, *Toola guannah Conjugo, &c.* 50, *Toola guannah Anivego*, (Two Score and Ten); 51, *Toola guannah Anivego Conjugo* (Two Score and Eleven), &c. The Name of the other Scores to 100, I know not; and there are few of them can reckon so far. For while I was among them I was industrious to learn their Numbers, and 'twas a Diversion I had with them; for they liked well my trying to imitate them, and would be very merry upon it. But 'twas not every one could readily carry me much farther than I have now reckon'd, or set me right if I was out.

Their way of Reckoning thus from Score to Score, is no more than what our old *English* way was. But their saying instead of 31, 32, One Score and Eleven, One Score and Twelve, &c. is much like the *High-Landers* of *Scotland* and *Ireland*,<sup>1</sup> reckoning Eleven and Twenty, Twelve and Twenty, &c. so for 53, the *High-Landers* say Thirteen and Twoscore, as the *Darien Indians* would, Two Score and Thirteen, only changing the Place. In my Youth I was well acquainted with the *High-Land*, or Primitive *Irish Language*; both as it is spoken in the North of *Ireland*, particularly at the *Navan* upon the *Boyne*, and about the Town of *Virgini* upon *Lough Rammer* in the Barony of *Castle Raghen*, in the County of *Cavan*;<sup>2</sup> and also in the *High-Lands* of *Scotland*, where I have been up and

<sup>1</sup> The forms of Gaelic spoken in Wafer's day by Scots in Argyll, and in contiguous Ireland, were just beginning to diverge from the common language.

<sup>2</sup> Navan, county town of co. Meath; Virginia, town in co. Cavan (neighbouring co. Meath), on Lough Ramor in the Barony of Castlerahan (present spelling). But Meath, as its name implies, is in the middle rather than north of Ireland, and a region famous for fine grazing rather than for hills; Cavan, in Ulster, is more mountainous.

down in several *Places*. Their way of Reckoning may be a Curiosity to some; for which Reason I have here inserted a Table of it; spelt, not according to the *Orthography*, but the *Pronunciation*.

1. *Hean*.<sup>1</sup>
2. *Dĩ*.
3. *Tree*.
4. *Caher*.
5. *Cooig*.
6. *Shae*.
7. *Shaucht*.
8. *Oacht*.
9. *Nnye*.
10. *Deh*.
11. *Heanegg*.
12. *Dĩweegg*.
13. *Treedeeegg*.
14. *Caherdeegg*.
15. *Cooigdeegg*.
16. *Shaedeegg*.
17. *Shauchtdeegg*.
18. *Oachtdeegg*.
19. *Nnyedeegg*.
20. *Feh*. A Score.
21. *Hean agus feh*. Briefly *ausfeh*; *agus* signifies *and*.
22. *Dĩ agus feh*. Two and a Score.
23. *Tree agus feh*. Three, &c.
30. *Deh agus feh*. Ten and a Score.
31. *Heanegg agus feh*. Eleven and a Score.
32. *Dĩweegg agus feh*.
40. *Yoyiht*.
41. *Hean agus th' yoyiht*.
42. *Dĩ agus th' yoyiht*.
50. *Deh agus th' yoyiht*.
51. *Heanegg agus th' yoyiht*.

<sup>1</sup> The list of numerals which follows is correct in Gaelic, although the modern recognized spelling differs. It is of special interest to Gaelic scholars, since few examples of the language, written in the seventeenth century, and offering a guide to pronunciation, are known.

52. *Dĩweegg augus th' yoyiht.*

60. *Tree feht.*

61. *Hean augus Tree feht.*

70. *Deh augus Tree feht.*

80. *Careh-fehth.*

90. *Deh augus Careh-fehth.*

100. *Cooig fehth; or Caed, a Hundred.*

200. *Oythead.*

1000. *Meelah.*

1000000. *Meelioon.*

My Knowledge of the *High-Land* Language made me the more capable of learning the *Darien Indians* Language, when I was among them. For there is some Affinity, not in the Signification of the Words of each Language, but in the Pronunciation, which I could easily imitate; both being spoken pretty much in the Throat, with frequent Aspirates, and much the same sharp or circumflex Tang or Cant. I learn'd a great deal of the *Darien* Language in a Months Conversation with them; for I was always asking what they call'd this and that, and *Lacenta* was continually talking with me; who spake also a few Words of broken *Spanish*. I took no care to retain any of the *Indians* Language; but some few Words that I still remember, I have here put as a Specimen.

*Tautah*, Father.

*Naunah*, Mother.

*Poonah*, Woman.

*Roopah*, Brother.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pinart gives *tata* for 'father'; *nana* for 'mother'; *puna* for 'woman'; and *hurpa* for brother: all of which confirm Wafer. *Hurpa*, according to the same authority, is used only for a younger brother; an elder brother is *yayate*. But other observers state that *yayat* is the Cuna mother's name for her son, the father calling him *chiscua-nuchu*; that the mother calls her daughter *puna*, the father calls her *chiscua*, has also been asserted. Wafer gives *neenah* for 'girl', but this seems to be the Spanish *niña*; a number of Spanish words have been, in the course of time, adopted, especially, of course, for things unknown until after the Spanish conquest, as *cabai* for 'horse' (Sp. *caballo*); *yavi* for 'key' (Sp. *llave*), and *chuman*, from the Spanish *semana*, 'week'. Wafer's *nee* for 'moon', is the modern *ni*, with the same sound; *Chaunah weemacah* seems an obvious version of the modern *nao*, 'go', and *ucumague*, 'hasten'.

'Big', given by Wafer as *shennorung*, is *chénetu* in Prince's rendering.

*Bidama foquah Roopoh?* How do you Brother:

*Neenah*, a Girl.

*Nee*, the Moon.

*Chaunah*, Go.

*Chaunah Weemacah*; Make hast, run.

*Shennorung*; big, a great Thing.

*Eechah*, ugly.

*Paeecha*; foh! ugly!

*Eechah Malooquah*, (an Expression of great dislike).

*Cotchah*, sleep.

*Caupah*, a Hammock.

*Cotchah Caupah?* Will you go sleep in the Hammock?

*Pa poonah eetah Caupah?* Woman, have you got the Hammock?

*Doolah*, Water.

*Doolah Copah?* Will you drink Water?

*Chicha-Copah*, Maiz-drink.

*Mamaubah*, Fine.

*Cah*, Pepper.

*Aupah eenah?* What do you call this?

Wafer's *eechah*, *paeechah*, and *eechah malooquah* may be connected with the modern Cuna *istar*, 'evil'; or the exclamation *icho*, equivalent of 'that is too much!'; or the word *ichaguagua*, 'hate'. *Pa* is a Cuna demonstrative article.

The next Cuna words and phrases given by Wafer show that he heard clearly and recorded honestly, but transferred the meaning of two words: actually, *capié*, written by some observers *carbey*, is 'sleep', and *cachi* is 'hammock'. Wafer's *Cotchah caupah?* meant literally 'Hammock sleep?'

Wafer gives *doolah* for 'water', his version of 'ti huala' (river water) usually shortened to *ti* nowadays; 'to drink' in Cuna is *copé*; so that Wafer's *Doolah Copah?* was literally 'Water drink?'. *Cah*, for the pepper (Sp. *pimiento*: *aji* in Mexico) popular for flavouring food all over the American tropics, is usually spelt 'ca' to-day. *Aupah eena*, Wafer's last phrase, is not so easily identified: *ina* is 'medicine' (curanderos or doctors of the Cuna are *Ina-tuledi*) and the question may have been 'What kind of medicine (or magic) is this?'

## Mr. Wafer's Voyages, &c.

HAVING thus gone over the *Isthmus*, and made such Observations about it as occur'd to me, I shall now resume the Thread of my Voyage, which I broke in the South Sea, at *Realeja* on the Coast of *Mexico*, where I parted with Mr. *Dampier*,<sup>1</sup> after my second being with him in those Seas. Captain *Swan*,<sup>2</sup> in the *Cygnets*, was going to the Westward; and Mr. *Dampier* chose to go with him. I staid with Captain *Davis*, in the *Batchelors Delight*;<sup>3</sup> and he was for going again to the Southward.

So we left them in the Harbour of *Realeja*, when we set out Aug. 27, 1685, with three other Vessels in our Company. But our Men growing very sick when we were got out to Sea, we soon put into the Gulph of *Amapalla*.<sup>4</sup> There we lay several Weeks at a small Island,<sup>5</sup> on which we built Huts for our sick Men, whom we put ashore. In our 4 small Ships, we had then above 130 sick of the Spotted Fever, many of whom died. Yet tho' I attended them every Day, I thank God I escap'd the Infection. But 'tis not my Intention to particularize as to all the Places or Occurrences we met with; for I kept no Journal. But some such Things as I took more particular Notice of, and thought worth remarking, I shall briefly speak of as I go along.

Being in great want of Provision while we lay here, we went ashore, in order to supply our Necessities at a Beef-Estantion<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dampier, eminent navigator and hydrographer, now set his face westward upon the journey that was to take him round the world: he reached England in September, 1691, and published his first volume of Voyages six years later.

<sup>2</sup> Swan met his death at the hands of natives at Mindinao; his journal is said to have eventually reached England. An interesting letter from Swan to Captain Wise, dated from Panama in March, 1685, is preserved among the MSS. of the Public Record Office in London.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Davis, in whose company Wafer eventually returned first to Virginia and then to England. The *Batchelor's Delight* had been captured off Sierra Leone in 1683.

<sup>4</sup> Named Fonseca by the Spanish, in honour of the famous Bishop.

<sup>5</sup> Tigre or Manguera.

<sup>6</sup> Estancia (Sp.) a 'station', or farm. One of the detailed drawings by

on the Continent, at the South of the Cod of the Bay, which lay from the Landing-place about three Miles. In our way we were forced to pass a hot River in an open *Savannah*, altho' we made some difficulty at it by reason of its Heat. This River issued out from under a Hill, but it was no Vulcan,<sup>1</sup> tho' there are several on this Coast. I had the Curiosity to wade up the Stream as far as I had Day-light to guide me. The Water was clear and shallow, but the Steams under the Hill were like those of a boiling Pot, and my Hair was wet with them. The River without the Hill reek'd for a great way. Many of our Men who had the Itch bath'd themselves here, and growing well soon after, they imputed it to the Sulphurousness, or other Virtue of this Water. In this place are a multitude of *Wolves*,<sup>2</sup> which are the boldest that ever I met with; for they would come so near, as to be almost ready to pull the Flesh out of our Hands. Yet we durst not shoot them for fear the noise of our Guns should call more to their Assistance, and we went but stragling up and down.

Our Men being tolerably well recover'd, we stood away to the Southward, and came to the Island *Cocos*,<sup>3</sup> in 5 Deg. 15 Min. N. Lat. 'Tis so call'd from its Coco-Nuts, wherewith 'tis plentifully stor'd. 'Tis but a small Island, yet a very pleasant one, for the middle of the Island is a steep Hill, surrounded all about with a Plain, declining to the Sea. This Plain, and particularly the Valley where you go ashore, is thick set with Coco-nut Trees, which flourish here very finely, it being a rich and fruitful Soil. They grow also on the Skirts of the hilly Ground in the middle of the Isle, and scattering in Spots upon the sides of it, very pleasantly. But that which contributes

Wm. Hack, in the Sloane MS. No. 239, based upon maps found by Sharp in the *Rosario*, shows a Spanish estate in the position indicated by Wafer.

<sup>1</sup> Volcano. Coseguna, still active, on the peninsula guarding the southern part of the Gulf of Fonseca, was not far distant.

<sup>2</sup> There are no wolves in Central America, nor apparently ever have been. What the buccaneers saw were probably coyotes (Mexican *coyotl*), scientifically known as *Canis latrans*; although they might have been the Grey Fox, *Urocyon cinereo-argenteus*.

<sup>3</sup> Off Costa Rica; now belongs to that Central American Republic. A favourite rendezvous of buccaneers in the Pacific, north of the Line; hence its modern attraction for treasure-hunters.



most to the Pleasure of the Place is, that a great many Springs of clear and sweet Water rising to the top of the Hill, are there gather'd as in a deep large Bason or Pond, the Top subsiding inwards quite round; and the Water having by this means no Channel whereby to flow along, as in a Brook or River, it overflows the Verge of its Bason in several Places, and runs trickling down in many pretty Streams. In some Places of its overflowing, the Rocky Sides of the Hill being more than perpendicular, and hanging over the Plain beneath, the Water pours down in a Cataract, as out of a Bucket, so as to leave a Space dry under the Spout, and form a kind of Arch of Water; which, together with the advantage of the Prospect, the near adjoining Coco-nut Trees, and the freshness which the falling Water gives the Air in this hot Climate, makes it a very charming Place, and delightful to several of the Senses at once.

Our Men were very much pleas'd with the Entertainment this Island afforded them, and they also fill'd here all their Water-Casks; for here is excellent fresh Water in the Rivulet, which those little Cataracts form below in the Plain; and the Ship lay just at its Outlet into the Sea, where there was very good Riding. So that 'tis as Commodious a Watering-Place as any I have met with.

Nor did we spare the Coco-nuts, eating what we would, and drinking the Milk, and carry several Hundreds of them on board. Some or other of our Men went ashore every Day. And one Day among the rest, being minded to make themselves very merry, they went ashore and cut down a great many Coco-trees; from which they gather'd the Fruit, and drew about 20 Gallons of the Milk. Then they all sat down and drank Healths to the King, Queen,<sup>1</sup> &c. They drank an excessive quantity; yet it did not end in Drunkenness. But however, that sort of Liquor had so chilled and benumb'd their Nerves, that they could neither go nor stand. Nor could they return on board the Ship, without the Help of those who had not been Partakers in the Frolick; nor did they recover it under 4 or 5 Days time.

<sup>1</sup> Dampier says that Spanish prisoners taken from Chepillo Island on 25 May, 1685 gave them the news of the death of King Charles and accession of James II. Charles had died on 6 February.

From hence we stood on still to the South, and came to one of the *Gallapago*-Islands,<sup>1</sup> lying under the Line. Upon one of these Islands we found a great many very large Land-Tortoise, of that sort which we us'd to call *Hecatee*.<sup>2</sup> Upon this Island is no Water to be found, but in one place, whither I observ'd these Animals frequently go to drink; but they go not into the Water.

At this Island there was but one Watering-place, and there we Careen'd our Ship. Hither many Turtle-Doves and other Birds resorted for Water; which were at first so familiar with us, that they would light upon our Heads and Arms; insomuch that for several Days we maintained the Ships Company with them. But in a little time they began to be so shy, that we could kill none, but what we shot. Here are also *Guano*'s<sup>3</sup> very plentiful, which are very good Food. There grows a sort of Wood in this Isle very sweet in smell. 'Tis but a low Tree, not shrubby, but like a Pear-tree, tho' thicker; and full of very sweet Gum. While we lay here at the *Gallapago*'s, we took in at one of the Islands there 500 Packs of Flower, which we had formerly left there upon the Rocks; but the Turtle-Doves had devour'd a great deal of the Flower, for the bags lay expos'd to the Air.<sup>4</sup>

When we left the *Gallapago*'s we went cruising upon and down about several of the Islands and Coasts of *Peru*; the Particulars of which I shall not trouble the Reader with. We had Engagements at *Guavra*,<sup>5</sup> *Guacha*<sup>6</sup> and *Pisca*;<sup>7</sup> and the two last

<sup>1</sup> In Sloane MS. 45, containing beautifully drawn charts of the Mexican and South American Pacific coasts, by Hack, is a map of the Galapagos islands showing names given by privateers in honour of distinguished people or their friends. Thus a 'very green' island 'plentifully stored with timber', bears the name of Philip Dossigny, and shows Mt. Morgan with Privateers' Rock alongside; Lord Wainman's little island is described: 'one side appears white like a castle wall and within green, but not one tree to be seen'; others are named after Cowley and Cavendish, Lord Culpeper, Nicolas Brattle, and Col. Robert Bindloss. The latter was a member of the Council of Jamaica, and perhaps the buccaneers had reason to remember him kindly.

<sup>2</sup> Jicatí; a variety used by the buccaneers for food.

<sup>3</sup> Iguanas.

<sup>4</sup> This flour had been seized in 1684, from Spanish ships on the way from Huanchaco to Panama.

<sup>5</sup> Huaura.

<sup>6</sup> Huacho.

<sup>7</sup> Pisco.

very sharp ones, yet we took the Towns. There was with us then in Company Captain *Knight* only; for the other two Vessels that came with us from *Amapalla*, had left us at the Island *Cocos*. 'Twas July 1686 when we were at *Pisca*, and Capt. *Knight* and we kept Company almost all that Year.

Among other Places we were at the Island *Gorgonia*,<sup>1</sup> where we clean'd; and I took notice of several Monkeys there who liv'd partly upon Oysters, which they got out of the Sea at low Water. Their way was to take up an Oyster, and lay it upon a Stone; and with another Stone to keep beating of it, till they had broke the Shell to pieces.

We were together also at *La Nasca*, which is a small Port, in the Lat. of 15 S. It affords abundance of rich, strong Wine, (as *Pisca* and other Places on that Coast also do) tasted much like that of *Madera*. 'Tis brought down out of the Country to this Port, to be shipt for *Lima*, *Panama*, or other Places. It lies here sometimes many Years stopt up in Jars of about eight Gallons apiece. But the Jars are under no Shelter, but stand expos'd to the hot scorching Sun; being plac'd along the Bay, and between the Rocks, every Merchant having his own Mark'd. We took in store of this Wine.

We were also together at *Coquimbo*,<sup>2</sup> a large Town with nine Churches in it, lying in about 29 S. Lat. Here we landed upon a deep Sand, in a large Bay, which had a small River that ran through the Country, and made its way out three Mile below the Town. In this River the *Spaniards* get Gold higher up in the Country; and the Sands of the River by the Sea, as well as the whole Bay, are all bespangled with Particles of Gold; insomuch that as we travelled along the Sandy Bays, our People were covered with a fine Gold-dust; but too fine for any thing else; for 'twould be an endless Work to pick it up.

<sup>1</sup> Gorgona, off the present Republic of Colombia.

<sup>2</sup> Or rather, at the pleasant old port, La Serena, on the north side of the Bay of Coquimbo: the modern town of Coquimbo lies in the southern curve. The author of the MS. Sloane 2752, speaks of 'Quoquemba, a towne of 7 churches, no large settlement but a mighty pleasant place and very rich of gold and silver. A delightsome garden for all sorts of fruite, cherries, appricocks, Peaches, Apples, Pears, prunello's, strawberrys which grow in our northern parts, and curious small running rivers parting every man's land mighty pleasant to behold'.

This Observation I have made in some other Places along the Coast, where any of those Gold-rivers make their way into the Sea thro' Sandy Bays; for there the Sand is in a manner gilded by them. But all that is worth looking after is up near the Rivers Heads, or towards the Mountains they fall from, where the weightier Grains lodge; for none but this meer Dust of it is wash'd down to the Sea.

We went after this to the Island of *John Fernando*,<sup>1</sup> where we Careen'd; and there Captain *Knight* left us, making the best of his Way round *Terra del Fuego* to the *West-Indies*. But we were for Coasting it back again toward the Line; having with us a Bark we had taken off *Pisca*.

Going off therefore from *John Fernando's*, we stood yet further South in going over to the Continent, to the Latitude of 39 S. as well to gain a Wind as to have the more of the Coast before us. We fell in first with the Island of *Mocha*, which lies in about 38 Deg. 20 Min. S. and wanting Water and Provision we came to an Anchor, and put ashore there, about the middle of *December*, 1686, and stay'd 5 or 6 Days. Here we were very well relieved, for the Island afforded both Water and fresh Provision for our Men, all the time we stay'd. The Land is very low and flat, and upon the Sea-coast sandy; but the middle Ground is good Mould, and produces Maiz and other Wheat, Barly, with variety of Fruits, &c. Here were several Houses belonging to the *Spanish Indians*, which were very well stored with Dunghil-Fowl. They have here also several Horses; but that which is most worthy of Note, is a sort of Sheep they have, which the Inhabitants call *Cornera de Terra*.<sup>2</sup> This Creature is about four Foot and an half high at the Back, and a very stately Beast. These Sheep are so Tame, that we frequently used to

<sup>1</sup> The Juan Fernandez group, of which the two largest are Más a Tierra ('Nearer Land') and Más Afuera ('Farther away'). Más a Tierra, well-watered, with plenty of fruit, fish, and fowl, was a cheerful place of refreshment for privateers below the Line; Alexander Selkirk had both predecessors and followers.

<sup>2</sup> 'Carnera de la tierra', i.e. 'sheep of the country'. This was the llama, one of four related native South American ruminants. The flesh of the llama can be eaten; its wool is prized for weaving; it is domesticated and, as Wafer says, will bear burdens. Its kin, the alpaca, with finer fleece, is also domesticated, but carries no burdens. The vicuña and guanaco are wild.

Place where we sat was cover'd with Sand and Sea-shells of divers Shapes and Forms; tho' indeed, which I wonder'd at, there were no Shell-fish on the Shores all along this whole Coast. I have landed at many Places of it, but could never find any. When we had rested our Selves in this Place, which was, as near as we could compute, 8 Miles from the Sea, and at least a Mile in perpendicular above it, we looked round us, to see for the River; but to our great Grief could discover none. All this Land, as well high as low Ground, is cover'd with Sand and Sea-shells, many of which are of the shape of a Scallop-shell; and these in vast quantities, in some Places, especially at the Feet of the Rocks, from whence they are crumbled and driven down by the Winds. For in the very Mass of the Stones of Rocks there were, as I remember, of the very same sorts of Shells.<sup>1</sup> We were told by the *Spaniards*, That at one time of the Year, the Sun melting the Snow that lies upon the top of the Mountains that are a great way up in the Country, makes the River that we looked for overflow. It may as well possibly be from Rains falling on these Mountains far within Land; for I never knew it Rain on all the Sea-Coast of *Chili* and *Peru*; but we could see Clouds hovering over the Tops of the Mountains within Land, as we sail'd along the Coast. And once at *Arica* we could not see the Mountains peeked Top for Clouds that hung about it; tho' at another time we saw it plain enough; the Rains then probably being gone off from the Hill-Country. But as for *Arica* it self and its Neighbouring Sea-Coast, we were told by old *Spaniards*, Inhabitants there, that they never had any Rain. I have also been at one time of the Year ashore at the River of *Ylo*, but could find little or no Water. Yet at another time of the Year there was Water enough, although I never knew of any Rain on that Coast, and the *Spaniards* told us it never rain'd there, unless far within Land; yet they have very great Dews. At *Copayapo* the Coast is barren and desolate, and so on each side all along both *Chili* and *Peru*; nothing is to be seen but bare Sands, and naked Rocks, unless in a Valley now and then; no Trees, Herbs, or other green Thing. Nor did we see any sort of Fowl, nor Beast, or other living Creature.

<sup>1</sup> Darwin, in 1835, noted the upraised sea-floors of Chile, proof of the gradual elevation of this part of South America.

No People, nor Sign of any; unless here and there a poor Town or Village, at as sorry a Port, with scarce Water enough, at most of them, to admit a Cock-boat, unless at a Flood; else, little or no Water, nor any Thing for Accommodation or Use.<sup>1</sup>

Getting no Water at *Copayapo*, we were forc'd to put to Sea again, and stood along the Coast to *Arica*, which is a Town of *Peru*, handsomely seated in the bending of that Coast, in the Lat. of between 18 and 19 S. Hither the Silver of *Potosi* is brought down to be shipt off for *Panama*, for the Harbour is tolerably good, having a Road made with a little Island lying before it, breaking the Swell of the Sea, which is here very great and continually rowling in upon the Shore; though smooth as the Surface of a River, here being little or no Wind to curl the Waves. It dashes so violent against the Shore, which is all along a high bold Coast, tho' nothing so high as the Mountains far within Land, that there is scarce any Landing hereabouts but just at *Arica* it self. There is a little River which *Arica* stands upon, and we would have taken in Water there; but there was no getting at any fresh, for its Outlet was among little craggy Rocks, and the Sea-water dash'd in among it. We landed here, and ransack'd the Place, meeting with little or no Resistance; we got a few Hogs and Poultry, Sugar and Wine; and saw a whole House full of *Jesuits* Bark, as I have said already, p. 99.<sup>2</sup> I was here also formerly with Capt. *Sharp*, when we had so smart an Engagement that we lost a great number of our Men; and every one of our Surgeons was kill'd beside my Self, who was then left to guard the Canoas.<sup>3</sup>

We went hence a little further to Lee-ward, and water'd at the River *Ylo*, where we got Oil-Olive, Figs, and Sugar, with several Fruits; all which grow there very plentiful. There is an Oil-work, and two or three Sugar-works. There are extraordinary good Oranges, of the *China* sort. 'Tis the finest

<sup>1</sup> This description remained correct until, after another two centuries, development of the nitrate pampas wakened 500 miles of barren coast to life, and modern engineers, bringing water from the cordillera, repeated the engineering feats of the Inca.

<sup>2</sup> Page 61 of the present volume.

<sup>3</sup> On 30 January, 1681, during the first expedition into the Pacific. The buccaneer surgeons were captured, but as a matter of fact their lives were spared on condition that they remained in Peru and devoted their services to Spaniards.

Valley I have seen on all the Coast of *Peru*; very fertile and well furnish'd with a multitude of Vegetables, tho' it has no Moisture but that of the little River, (which they carry winding up and down among their Grounds in Artificial Channels) and the great Dew which falls every Night. The Valley is the pleasanter, and so are all those of *Peru* and *Chili*, for the dismal barren Mountains that lie all about, and serve as Foil to them. They are mostly sandy or black Rocks, like Cinders or Iron-Stones, for Colour.

In sailing along upon this Coast we were sometimes put to it for Food as well as Water; and once were so Hunger-pinched, that meeting with some Sea-Crabs on the Coast, one of our Men, Mr. *Smallbones*, eat them raw, and even Sea-weeds. But others of us, whose Stomachs would not serve for that Food, looking about, found a lean gall'd Horse grazing in a little Spot at the foot of the Hill; which we presently kill'd, cut in pieces, and making a Fire with Sea-weeds, eat the Flesh while 'twas hardly warm, leaving none, but carrying the very Guts aboard.

I shall not pursue all my Coasting along this Shore with Captain *Davis*; but two Particulars more I must not omit. The one is, That we put ashore at *Vermejo*,<sup>1</sup> in 10 Deg. S. Lat. There we landed about 30 Men (of whom I was one) to see for Water, or any other Refreshment that we wanted. After we were landed, we marched about four Miles up a Sandy Bay; all which we found covered with the Bodies of Men, Women and Children; which lay so thick, that a Man might, if he would, have walked half a Mile, and never trod a Step off a dead human Body. These Bodies, to appearance, seem'd as if they had not been above a Week dead; but if you handled them, they prov'd as dry and light as a Spunge or piece of Cork. After we had been some time ashore, we espyed a Smoak; and making up to it, found an old Man, a *Spanish Indian*, who was ranging along the Sea-side, to find some dried Sea-weeds, to dress some Fish which his Company had caught; for he belong'd to a Fishing-boat hard by. We asked him many

<sup>1</sup> The port of Huarmey, Peru, where the remains of an ancient cemetery of the Chimú folk are still to be seen; the bodies were not, probably, embalmed, but dessicated in the perennially dry and hot sand of the coast.

Questions, in *Spanish*, about the Place, and how those dead Bodies came there: To which he returned for Answer, That in his Fathers time the Soil there, which now yielded nothing, was green, well-cultivated and fruitful: that the City of *Wormia*<sup>1</sup> had been well inhabited with *Indians*: and that they were so numerous, that they could have handed a Fish, from Hand to Hand, 20 Leagues from the Sea, until it had come to the Kings or *Ynca's* Hand. That the River was very deep, and the Current strong: and that the reason of those dead Bodies was, That when the *Spaniards* came, and block'd up and lay'd Siege to the City, the *Indians*, rather than lie at the *Spaniards* Mercy, dug Holes in the Sand, and buried themselves alive. The Men as they now lie, have with them their broken Bows; and the Women their Spinning-wheels, and Distaffs with Cotton-yarn upon them. Of these dead Bodies I brought on board a Boy of about 9 or 10 Years of Age, with an intent to bring him home for *England*, but was frustrated of my purpose by the Sailors; who having a foolish Conceit, that the Compass would not traverse aright, so long as any dead Body was on board, threw him overboard, to my great Vexation.

This Place is a deep sandy Ground, of little Hills and Valleys of Sand. 'Tis like the rest of this part of *Peru*, without Rain: but it has Dews, and there was the Channel of a small River; yet 'twas dry when we were there.

The other Particular I would speak of, is of our touching at a Place called *Santa*, a small Town in the Lat. of 8 Deg. 40 Min. S. Here I went ashore and so up to the Town, which was three Miles or thereabouts from the Sea. In our way to the Town we cross'd a small Hill; and in a Valley between the Hill and the Town we saw three small Ships of about 60 or 100 Tuns apiece, lodg'd there, and very ruinous. It caused in us great Admiration, and we were puzzled to think how those Ships could come there: but proceeding toward the Town, we saw an *Indian*, whom we called, and he at the first Motion came

<sup>1</sup> Huarney: see preceding note. The region may have been artificially watered by canals from the mountains, in prehistoric times. The story of the burying-alive was probably quite unfounded; the ancient cemetery is typical of the region and the population had probably, like that of Nasca and Paracas, disappeared before the Spanish conquest.



to us. We ask'd him several Questions, and among the rest, how those Ships came there? He told us, That about 9 Years before, these 3 Ships were riding at Anchor in the Bay, which is an open Place, about 5 or 6 Leagues from Point to Point; and that an Earthquake came, and carried the Water out of sight; which stayed away 24 Hours, and then came in again, tumbling and rowling with such Violence, that it carried these Ships over the Town, which then stood on the Hill which we came over, and lodged them there; and that it destroyed the Country for a considerable way along the Coast. This Report, when we came to the Town, was confirmed to us by the Parish-Priest, and many other Inhabitants of the Town.

We continued thus Rambling about to little purpose, sometimes at Sea, and sometimes ashore; till having spent much time, and visited many Places, we were got again to the *Gallapago's*, under the Line; and were then resolv'd to make the best of our Way out of these Seas.

Accordingly we went thence again for the Southward, intending to touch no where till we came to the Island of *John Fernando*.<sup>1</sup> In our way thither, about four a Clock in the Morning, when we were in the Lat. of 12 Deg. 30 Min. S. and about 150 Leagues from the Main of *America*, our Ship and Bark felt a terrible Shock; which put our Men into such a Consternation, that they could hardly tell where they were, or what to think; but every one began to prepare for Death. And indeed the Shock was so sudden and violent, that we took it for granted the Ship had struck upon a Rock. But when the Amazement was a little over, we cast the Lead, and sounded, but found no Ground; so that after Consultation, we concluded it must certainly be some Earthquake. The suddenness of this Shock made the Guns of the Ship leap in their Carriages, and several of the Men were shaken out of their Hammocks. Captain *Davis*, who lay with his Head over a Gun, was thrown out of his Cabbin. The Sea, which ordinarily looks Green, seemed then of a Whitish Colour; and the Water which we took up in our Buckets for the Ships use, we found to be a little mixed with Sand. This at first made us think there was some Spit of

<sup>1</sup> Four men elected in November 1687 to leave the *Batchelor's Delight* and to stay ashore on *Más a Tierra*.

Sand; but when we had sounded, it confirmed our Opinion of the Earthquake. Some time after we heard News, That at that very time there was an Earthquake at *Callao*, which is the Road for *Lima*; and that the Sea ebbed so far from the Shore, that on a sudden there was no Water to be seen. And that after it had been away a considerable time, it return'd in rowling Mountains of Water, which carried the Ships in the Road of *Callao* a League up into the Country, overflowed the City of *Callao*, though it stood upon a Hill, together with the Fort, and drowned Man and Beast for 50 Leagues along Shore; doing Mischief even at *Lima*, though six Miles within Land from the Town of *Callao*. This seems to have been much such another Earthquake as that, the Effects of which we saw at *Santa*.

Having recover'd our Fright, we kept on to the Southward. We steer'd South and by East, half Easterly, until we came to the Latitude of 27 Deg. 20 Min. S. when about two Hours before Day, we fell in with a small, low, sandy Island, and heard a great roaring Noise, like that of the Sea beating upon the Shore, right a Head of the Ship. Whereupon the Sailors, fearing to fall foul upon the Shore before Day, desired the Captain to put the Ship about, and to stand off till Day appeared; to which the Captain gave his consent. So we plied off till Day, and then stood in again with the Land; which proved to be a small flat Island, without the guard of any Rocks. We stood in within a quarter of a Mile of the Shore, and could see it plainly; for 'twas a clear Morning, not foggy nor hazy. To the Westward, about 12 Leagues by Judgment, we saw a range of high Land, which we took to be Islands, for there were several Partitions in the Prospect. This Land seem'd to reach about 14 or 16 Leagues in a Range, and there came thence great Flocks of Fowls. I, and many more of our Men would have made this Land, and have gone ashore at it; but the Captain would not permit us. The small Island bears from *Copayapo* almost due E. 500 Leagues; and from the *Gallapago's*, under the Line, 600 Leagues.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Davis's report of sighting unknown land in the Pacific stirred European navigators, who readily convinced him that his first idea (conveyed to Wafer: see p. 143) that he had seen 'Terra Australis' must be incorrect. Searches made by many captains led to the discovery, in 1722, of Easter

When we were again arriv'd at *John Fernando's*, which was at the latter End of the Year, 1687, we clean'd our Ship there, having quitted our Bark, and stood over to the Main; intending to get some of the Sheep of *Mocha*, for our Voyage round *Terra del Fuego*. But when we came there, the *Spaniards* had wholly destroyed or carried away the Sheep, Horses, and all other living Creatures. We went then to *Santa Maria*, an Island in 37 Deg. S. in expectation of fresh Provision; but this Island was likewise destroy'd. So we were forc'd to content our selves with such Provision as we had brought from the *Gallapago's*; which were chiefly Flower, Maiz, Hecatée or Land-Tortoise salted, and the Fat of it tried, or made into Lard or Oil, of which we got there 60 Jars. The *Spaniards* had set Dogs ashore at *John Fernando's* also, to destroy the Goats there, that we might fail of Provision. But we were content with killing there no more than we eat presently; not doubting but we should have found Sheep<sup>1</sup> enough at *Mocha*, to victual the Ship.

Island by the Dutch Admiral Roggeveen. This might be accepted as Davis's 'high land', but the problem of the 'low sandy island' remained unsolved. La Perouse thought that Davis saw San Ambrosio and San Felix, two of the Desventurados group; but these are only 200 leagues from the Chilean coast, lie in a direct line southward from the Galapagos Is., and must have been well known.

Captain F. W. Beechey, R.N., was one of the later navigators who tried to solve the puzzle of Davis' island. In the year 1825 he took H.M.S. *Blossom* 'between the tracks of Vancouver and Malespina on the South side, and many other navigators on the north, who . . . had run down the parallels of 27 and 28 South in search of the land discovered by Davis'.

Beechey sailed to the island of Sala y Gomez, obvious candidate for identification as the 'small flat island' of Davis' landfall, but found that not only was Easter Island invisible from that point, but that, leaving Sala y Gomez on 14 November, Easter Island was not sighted until the afternoon of 16 November. However, Beechey considered that the 'high land' seen in the distance by Davis was, actually, Easter Island; for, in that case, the error in his reckoning was 'not more than might have happened to any dull sailing vessel circumstanced as his was'. Strong and rapid currents prevail near the Galapagos Islands. Admiral Roggeveen, in 1722, was drifted 318 miles west of his supposed situation; La Perouse found an error of some 300 miles between the Chilean coast and the Sandwich islands, in 1785, and the *Blossom* in 1825, 'experienced a set of 270 miles'. Davis was probably still farther astray. It is not impossible that the buccaneer sighted Easter Island from an islet that has since disappeared. Burney, in his *History of the Buccaneers*, discusses the question at length.

<sup>1</sup> Llamas.

Three or Four of our Men, having lost what Money they had at Play, and being unwilling to return out of these Seas as poor as they came, would needs stay behind at *John Fernando's*, in expectation of some other Privateers coming thither. We gave them a small Canoa, a Porridge-pot, Axes, Macheats, Maiz, and other Necessaries. I heard since that they planted some of the Maiz, and tam'd some of the Goats, and liv'd on Fish and Fowls; of which there is one sort Grey, and about the size of a small Pullet, that makes Burrows in the Ground like a Rabbit; lodging there in the Night, and going out to catch Fish in the day: For 'tis a Water-fowl, and eats a little fishy, yet pretty well tasted after a little burying. I heard also that these Men were taken by a Privateer-Vessel which came thither a Year or two after; and that one of them is since come to *England*.

We were now standing out to Sea again, to double *Terra del Fuego*. We were in a terrible Storm for about three Weeks before we came off Cape Horn. We did not see Cape Horn, being a great way to the South of it, and in the Lat. of 62 Deg. 45 Min. S. nor did we well know what Course to steer, having but very indifferent Seamen aboard. It was now about the height of Summer here; for I remember that upon *Christmas* day, 1687, we were just clear of the Storm, and in the Latitude we mention'd, off Cape Horn. Running hence to the Northward again, being now got out of the South Sea, we met several Islands of Ice; which at first seemed to be real Land. Some of them seemed a League or two in length, and some not above half a Mile. The biggest seemed, as we sail'd by them, which we did before the Wind for several Days, to be about 4 or 500 Foot high. We sounded near them, but found no Ground; so that it may reasonably be concluded they were afloat; and perhaps reach'd as deep into the water, as their height was above it.<sup>1</sup> We saw no such Islands of Ice as I went into the South Sea with Mr. *Dampier*;<sup>2</sup> neither did I ever hear that Captain *Sharp* met with any in his return out of that Sea. These Islands appear'd to us so plain at Night, that we could easily see how to steer clear of them. But there were some which lay under Water, which we could not possibly shun, but

<sup>1</sup> One-tenth of an ice-berg, at most, floats above water.

<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of 1683, four years previously.

sometimes they would shake our Ship: yet they never did us much Dammage. From these Hills of Ice came very cold Blasts of Wind; insomuch that our Men, newly coming out of a hot Country, could hardly endure the Deck.

In all our Passage round *Terra del Fuego* the Weather was so stormy, for 3 Weeks that we lay to the Southward of Cape Horn, and the Sun and Stars so obscur'd, that we could take no Observation of our Lat. yet, by our Reckoning, we were in very near 63 Deg. S. Lat. which is the farthest to the South that any *European*, probably, ever yet was, and perhaps any Man. When we were in Lat. 62. Deg. 30 Min. we began to think of shifting our Course to the Northward again, toward the *Æthiopick* and *Atlantick* Seas;<sup>1</sup> and we soon brought our selves to stand E. N. E. and E. and by N. and kept much those Courses for a great way. In our Passage we had allow'd for three Points Westerly Variation: but when we came to have a good Observation, we found that we had gone to the Eastward, making our way E. and by S. We found therefore that we had mistaken the Variation of the Compass, so that we concluded the Variation to be Easterly, and steer'd away N. N. E. and N. E. and by N.

By this means, when we came into the Latitude of the River of *Plate*, along which we intended to run, we reckon'd our selves to be about 100 Leagues off Land; and stood in directly for the Shore, not doubting but we should find it at that distance. But we were then really 500 Leagues off; and having run some hundreds of Leagues to the West in the same Latitude, and yet finding no Land, our Men were out of Heart, fearing we were still in a wrong Course, and being all in danger of perishing at Sea, through want of Provisions; having little Food, and less Water. It pleas'd God, during this Exigence, to send us a Days Rain, which fell very plentiful; and we sav'd of it several Casks of Water, which was a great Refreshment to us, and made our Men pluck up their Hearts for some time. But having run 450 Leagues in this Latitude, and still finding no

<sup>1</sup> Wafer here uses 'Ethiopic Sea' to mean waters washing the west coast of Africa, and 'Atlantic' for that part of the ocean bordering the New World; the name Atlantic was in process of coming into general use for the whole ocean.

Land, which they had expected to have seen in 100, this bred a fresh Commotion, and we had like to have been all together by the Ears upon it. The greatest part were for changing the Course, which they thought must needs be wrong. But Captain *Davis*, and Mr. *Knott* the Master, begg'd of them for God's sake to keep the same Course two Days longer, which they did, though we had but a small Wind: and in that time a Flight of Locusts and other Insects coming off with a Flurry of Wind from the West, assur'd us there was Land there, not far off. Had not this providentially hapned, we should have chang'd our Course, for the Men would not have been persuaded to the contrary; for a great many of them were so ignorant, that they would not be persuaded but they were still in the *South Sea*: and had we chang'd this Course, we should have stood out to Sea again, and must have perish'd there.

The Land we made, following the direction of the Flurry and the Locusts, and setting the Point they come from by the Compass, was a little to the North of the Mouth of the River of *Plate*. We put ashore here to get Water and fresh Provisions, of which this Country<sup>1</sup> afforded plenty: And here our Men having with them their Fusees, spy'd a Herd of Sea-Swine,<sup>2</sup> as we call them, upon a Point a Land; and were thereupon resolved to kill some of them to bring on board. In order thereunto they contrived, that some Men should stop the Pass that led up to the Mountain, whilst others went in among them, and with their Cutlasses did what Execution they could. But still as the Men came near them, the Herd walked toward the Sea, contrary to our Mens expectation; for they hitherto took them to be Land-Swine. There they stood on the Shore, staring at and admiring our People: but when the Men came near enough, and were just going to strike among them, the whole Herd jump'd into the Sea, leaving the Men in amazement, and sorely vex'd at their Disappointment. But at another time they shot and brought on Board two of them, which eat like Land-pork, except some Fishy taste it had. They were

<sup>1</sup> The present Republic of Uruguay. The 'mountain' indicates that they were near the place where Montevideo was later established: no other high ground is seen from the banks of the river Plata until Brazil is reached.

<sup>2</sup> This must be the Southern Sea-lion, *Otaria jubata*.

shap'd much like Swine, and had short Hair more bristly than that of Seals; and like them had finny Stumps to swim with, and were of a Black Colour. The Country hereabouts is well watered, but without any Inhabitants. Here is notwithstanding abundance of black Cattle,<sup>1</sup> of which for several Scores of Leagues we observed many Herds; with Deer also, and Estridges.<sup>2</sup>

We saw a great many of these Estridges, and found abundance of their Eggs on the Sand. For there she drops her Eggs upon the Ground, and 'tis said she never takes any farther Care of them; but that they are hatched by the Sun, and the young one so soon as hatched follows the first Creature it meets with. I my self had sometimes a great many young Estridges following me. They are a foolish Bird; they will follow Deer or any Creature. The old Birds are here very large: I measur'd the Thigh of one of them, and thought it little less than my own. We have had several of them on board, and some we eat; but the old ones were very rank, course Food. Some fancy that the Estridge eats Iron: I believe just as truly as Poultry eat Pebble-Stones, not as Food but for Digestion, and to serve as Mill-Stones, or Grinders, to macerate their Food in the Maw. The Estridge will indeed swallow Nails or Stones, or any thing you throw to it: but they pass through the Body as whole as they went in.

Putting off to Sea again, we Coasted along *Brasil*, and thence toward the *Caribbe*-Islands; where meeting with one Mr. *Edwin Carter*, in a *Barbadoes* Sloop, I and some others went aboard him, and had of him the News of King *James's* Proclamation to pardon and call in the *Buccaniers*. So we went in

<sup>1</sup> Cattle had been brought to the margins of the Plata about 1575 by *Espinosa*, Treasurer of the province, and had run wild and multiplied so that they darkened the face of the pampa and impeded the caravans of travellers.

<sup>2</sup> The 'estridge' that Wafer saw in Uruguay is the Rhea; as Hudson says: 'the grand archaic ostrich of America survives from a time when there were also giants among the avians', and is still to be seen although its numbers have been greatly reduced by persistent hunting. The bird is smaller, and has less splendid plumage than the African ostrich. Dried rhea stomachs are or were an article of commerce in South America; pepsin is extracted from them.

his Ship to the River *de la Ware*, and up into *Pensilvania*, to the City of *Philadelphia*; where I arriv'd in *May*, 1688.

There I stayed some time; after which I came down the River *de la Ware* as far as *Apokunnumy-creek*, with Capt. *Davis*, and *John Hingson* who was left with me on the *Isthmus*. There we carted our Chests, with other Goods, over a small Neck of Land into *Bohemia-River*, which leads down the great Bay of *Chisapeek* to Point-Comfort in *James-River* in *Virginia*.<sup>1</sup> There I thought to settle. But meeting with some Troubles, after a three Years residence there, I came home for *England* in the Year 1690.

<sup>1</sup> Here the three adventurers had the misfortune to encounter H.M.S. *Dumbarton*, unit of a squadron engaged, on behalf of Sir Robert Holmes, in searching for pirates who had not surrendered in response to James II's proclamation of 1687; they were arrested, put in irons, kept in gaol at James Town for two years, and their goods sequestrated. In 1689 they were set free and allowed to return to England. See Introduction.

FINIS





## APPENDIX I

### WAFER'S 'SECRET REPORT'<sup>1</sup>

To

The Most Noble Thomas Duke of Leeds<sup>2</sup> &c.

May itt Please your Grace

Their is not a Nobleman in all Great Brittaina that has looked with a more Favorable Eye upon the Paines that Travilers have taken to Establish their Observation on the Face of the Terrestriall Globe then your Grace.

I have not the Vanity to believe that this my Poore Mite can make any Addition to your Graces great knowlidge but as your Grace is one of the Best of Judges in this Case Do most Humbley begg your Grace to Pardon this Poor but honist Intention for the Welfaire and Advantage of my Country

Being with all Iṃaginable Respects may itt Please yo<sup>r</sup> Grace  
Your Graces most Humble and most Devoted Ser<sup>t</sup>

Lionell Wafer

Being Introduced by y<sup>r</sup> Grace to my Lord Tresurer<sup>3</sup> and by his commands have Write and Presented to his Lordship the Insueing Lynes and being under a Caution not to Expose my Thoughts to any in Obediance to itt have presumed not to

<sup>1</sup> Addl. MS. 28079, ff. 39-50.

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Leeds was originally Sir Thomas Osborne, a Tory baronet of Yorkshire; able and shrewd, he was liked by Charles II, occupied ministerial posts, and was created Earl of Danby; he disliked what he considered the arbitrariness of James II, and signed the famous invitation to William of Orange, whose marriage to Mary he helped to promote, and seized York for that prince. He became a close adviser of both William and Mary, was created Earl of Caermarthen, and President of the Council. When he was made Duke of Leeds in 1694 he had accumulated a large fortune, partly, it was rumoured, through corrupt means; he was accused of accepting bribes from the 'old' East India Company, and in 1695 the Commons impeached him. Although the case failed for lack of evidence, the Duke had lost ground in public opinion, and, while remaining President of the Council until 1699, performed no duties for the last four years. He remained, however, active in affairs, and, with previous interests in the East Indies, was probably ready to promote profitable British enterprises in the West.

<sup>3</sup> If the Report were undertaken in 1698, as seems likely, this would refer to Charles Montagu, afterwards Lord Halifax.

present itt to your Grace till I Obtain'd Leave.—This I hope your Grace will Pardon with the meanness of the Language that Expresses the True Sentiments of my Heart and is In-devored by me as followeth—

The great Estem that all good men as well as my Selfe have for my Lord Treasurer who has nothing att Heart or in Veiew but what he Levells att the Good of Great Brittain and that I may not be cencered or thought Ill off by his Lordship as concerning my Discription of the Ports and Places which are or are not fitt to Settle Inn In the South Sea.

I say if a Forst<sup>1</sup> Trade to the South Seas be Intended then what I write to his Lordship and accordingly Delivered I will stand by and Aver.

But if a Trade be Procured by the consent of the Spainard unto all the Ports of the South Seas, then I wold take In some of those Ports I did not think to settle att.

And that your Lordship may Estem my Thoughts the Better I offer these Reasons—(vizt)

I say if an Agreement was to be made with the Court of Spaine I shold be very willing to take Inn these Ports Following N<sup>o</sup> 1. The River of Plate Because I cold be lett Into the Trade of Paraguay, Chilliae, and that part of Peru which is next the neck of that River, for the Heads or Springs theirol falls from high mountains which as I have been told containes in their Bowells great Quantitys of Gold and Silver and the Inhabitants as well as the Spainards are very Rich. Hear a Factory wold be of great Use to us.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forced.

<sup>2</sup> Buenos Aires, ignored by Wafer, was in 1698 of small political importance to Spain, and was still included in the Viceroyalty of Peru. The Governor had suggested in vain to the Council of the Indies, after Morgan's raid on Panama in 1671, that the annual trading fleet between Seville and the Isthmus should be diverted to the Rio de la Plata. Spanish trade and travellers, bound for Peru, occasionally sailed as far up river as Buenos Aires, thence crossing the pampa and the Andes into Bolivia or Chle, as an alternative to Panama or the Horn: but the liveliest riverine trade was contraband, carried on by English and Portuguese. The latter had established a trading post, illicit in Spanish eyes, at Colonia de Sacramento, opposite Buenos Aires, in 1678, and co-operated with British and other sea-rovers. A 'factory' of the South Sea Company was established at Buenos Aires by agreement with Spain, after the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

Nº 2. The next within the Cape in the South Sea wold be Baldivia<sup>1</sup> which lyes the most Southermost Port and as itt ware Comānds all the Trade Westward by Reason of the Winds and itt is the last Place of Refuge and Refreshment for Ships homeward Bound out of the Seas.

Nº 3. The next wold be Coquimbo—or some Port Betwene those Two because they Lye in the Center of Trade with the Chilian Indians who's Country abounds in vast Riches.

Nº 4. The next wold be Aurica<sup>2</sup> as itt is the Tradeing Port for Potocia from whence that vast quantity of Bullion comes that Supplyes almost the World

Nº 5. The next wold be Callo,<sup>3</sup> which is the Landing Place and within Three Miles of Lima the Metropolis of Peru.

Nº 6. The next wold be Payta, both for Trade and to be Furnished with Wood and Water for Ships which Conveniences are not got with Ease upon this Coast.

Nº 7. The next wold be Guiaquill<sup>4</sup>, for the sake of Trading up the River that runs by itt to Quito, and many other great and Small Towns that gathers Gold, and for to gitt or Build Ships or Boats as being the onely Place on this Southward Coast for that use.

Nº 8. The next wold be Panama<sup>5</sup>, which is a very good Port and of great Consequence but very unhealthy.

Nº 9. As to the other Ports to the Westward as Pueblo Nuero, Gulfe Dulce and soe to Relegio and to Leons<sup>6</sup> and so for

<sup>1</sup> Valdivia; or rather Wafer referred to the port called Corral, an excellently sheltered harbour. The city of Valdivia lies 20 miles upstream.

<sup>2</sup> Arica, port for the silver from Potosi, where a population of 150,000 then depended upon mining.

<sup>3</sup> Callao, 6 miles from Lima.

<sup>4</sup> Guayaquil, on the fine Guayas river; Wafer was mistaken in thinking that it drains from the region close to upland Quito. Guayaquil remained an important centre for ship-building throughout colonial times; it had a timber-cutting rival in Chepo, on the Chepo river running into Panama Bay; a number of Spanish saw-mills operated in the Chepo region, helping to supply Lima, until the Indian rising of 1726.

<sup>5</sup> New Panama, moved to its present site in 1673, after Morgan's raid on Old Panama in 1671. A 'factory' of the South Sea Company was established at Panama City about 1715.

<sup>6</sup> Pueblo Nuevo, a small town west of Panama City, settled by Pedrarias Davila after the reduction of the Guaymi tribes; Golfo Dulce, off Costa Rica; Realejo ('small landing or camping-place') is often spelt incorrectly, not only

14 Degres North are fitt Places for Ships to Touch att for Trade, but in my Opinion not to Settle a Factory att.

But things of this Nature will be Better knowne after a Trade is well Settled in those Parts.

As to the Discription of any of those Ports or Places I Refer to the Following Paper and Numbers which are a True Copey of what I Deliveered to my Lord Treasurer.

According To your Lordships Derections I have given an Accompt of the Places And Ports which are most Proper to make a Settelment Inn and which are not In the South Seas: And your Lordship giving me a Caution not to Expose my Thoughts to any In Obedience to itt have presumed to present itt in this Ordinary Hand, Relyeing on your Lordships Pardon for this Plain Usage, Asshuring your Lordship none shall be more Observable and Curcumspect to your Dictates Than my selfe iff Honored with your Lordships Commands.

My Lord—I have not been very Exact in Laying downe the Latitudes Off those Severall Ports and Harbors Inn the South Seas, Refering itt to those Draughts your Lordship has.

My Lord—I consider the great Runn betwixt England and Cape Horn Which is near 110 Degrees of Latitude if you goe Round the Cape and from the Cape to the Equator 58 Degrees and from that to *Amapolla*—the furthest Place I have binn Westward 14 Degres. In this great Runn I shall give your Lordship my Opinion Both of the Conveniences and Inconveniences of Settelment.

1<sup>st</sup> makeing the best and Shortest Course from England to Cape De Verds being near 32 Degrees Run, and the First Place that Either Wood or Water can be had, from thence to Cape Augustin<sup>1</sup> in Brasile, which lyes in About 10 Degrees South.

In the most part of this Tract, there is no place of Refreshment.<sup>1</sup> From thence to the River of Plate is 32 Degrees South,

as by Wafer, but in more modern times, as 'Rio Lexa' or 'Rio Lejo'; the name has nothing to do with *rio* (river). Realejo is now nothing but a decayed village of grass-grown streets and a few score wooden houses, but in Wafer's day, and until Corinto became the chief Pacific port of Nicaragua about 1884, Realejo was the port for the city of León.

<sup>1</sup> Actually, Cabo São Agostinho is in about 8° 20' S.L., a few miles south of the port of Recife (Pernambuco). Wafer had apparently not seen this

the most of which I have coasted and saw not any Settlements. Yitt the Sand, which was Champine was ass it ware Covered with Black Cattle Ostriches and Dear. About the neck of the narrow part of the River Is a Settlement of Spaniards, who's Chefe Employ is in gathering Gold; how far this may be a Port for a Settlement I cannot Judge, But I was Credibly Inform'd that those Spaniards kept communication with Poteci.

The next Port to the River of Plate Southward upon the Cost of Patagonia Is Port Julian where Ships may be Suplyed with Fresh Water and Wood But there can be no Commerce for Tradeing hear The Inhabitants being all Wild Indians.—Latitude 49 Degrees South.

The next is the Streight of Magillian in Latitude 52 Degres South, Through which I wold not pass unless the Want of Fresh Water & Wood Constran'd me to itt, Because the Run thro' those Streights is very tedious Long and Dangerous soe that Round Terra Del Ficogo<sup>1</sup> in my Opinion is the safest and best Passage.

I Shall not Trouble your Lordship with a Discription of itt because itt is very well Discribed already.

Being past the Cape and Run downe to the 48 Degree Northward from the Cape where there are a Great many Islands close by the Shore. Altho' I never was in any of these Islands—I doe not Beleave any of them are proper to Settle In—my Reason is because they are Inhabited by Wild Indians onely who have nither Traffick nor Trade, nor doe I find the Spaniards have any Settlements in those Parts worth the takeing Notice off and to be sure if there were any Hony the Bees would be there.<sup>2</sup>

The first Porth Northward after we pass the Island is a

town; nor Bahia, then the head of Portuguese colonies of Brazil; Rio de Janeiro, already a large city; nor São Vicente (Santos), settled in 1530.

<sup>1</sup> Tierra del Fuego.

<sup>2</sup> Wafer was right. From the Strait of Magellan up to Valdivia no permanent town was established in Spanish colonial times, although Sarmiento in 1584 had tried to settle the 'City of Philip' in the Strait itself: Cavendish found it a city of the dead two years later, and English sailors thenceforth called the site 'Port Famine'. No settlements on the main, Magellanic islands, or on Chonos Archipelago, were made until after Independence: but the present city of Magallanes (Punta Arenas) stands almost on the site of the City of Philip.

Garrison'd Towne Call'd Baldivia or Waldivia—which I presume is kept there by the Spaniards to keep the Natives in Subjection. This Port by its Scituation must needs be very well supplied with Wood and Water and is a very fitt place to settle In and to Endeavor to gitt the Friendship of the Valiant Chilians.

The next Port To this is the Island of Moncha<sup>1</sup> Latt<sup>d</sup> 38 South; itt Afords very good Refreshments and very good Anchoring & Rideing for Ships betwene itt and the Maine.

Next to this is the Island of St. Mary's<sup>2</sup> where there is a very good Bay and good Anchoring, with great plenty of Provisions Latt<sup>d</sup> 37 South.

The next to this is Valpariso Latt<sup>d</sup> 33 South; here is a River and A good Port and No bad Landing, which is very Rare upon this Coast; here is good Refreshment and both Wood and Water, but here is no Gold River. Nither is itt in my opinion fitt to settle in.

Next is the Port of Coquimbo:<sup>3</sup> Latt<sup>d</sup> 30 South; here is very good Rideing for ships and as Oculatas Testis doth assert itt to bee, soe itt is a very Fine Citty Setuated on a Riseing Ground, within halfe a mile of itt the Pyrimid Hill much resembling a Sugar Loafe; itt is Three or four miles Distant from the Sea or the Landing Place. Itt is a Pritty Large Citty and in itt are Nine Parish Church's, The Soile is good and there is great Plenty of all sorts of Graine and Fruit. This Citty is soe situated by Nature that itt might Easely be made almost Impregnable by Art, Nature as itt were pointing to several Places adapted for Building of Forts &c. Here are great Plenty of Fish and Fowl and Scarce any thing wanting that is nessesary for mankind. Who ever is master of this Citty and hath but a good Port betwixt itt and Baldivia may not onely be master of all the Adjacent Places but also the greatest Part of Chillia; by this Citty Runs a very Fine River which affords great Quantities of

<sup>1</sup> Mocha. Drake touched here in 1578, tried to get water, but was driven off by Indians. These native inhabitants must have been exterminated or sent to the mainland, for the island later became a safe refreshing-place for buccaneers.

<sup>2</sup> Santa Maria. Wafer had first seen the island in 1681, when the first expedition to the South Seas was under a succession of leaders. Here Sharp was deposed.

<sup>3</sup> La Serena.

Gold, Near which are abundance of Copper mines which they make use of Instead of Iron upon all Occasions. I have seen in those Seas Ships whose Spikes Bolts and all there other materials which with us are made with Iron all of Copper.

The next Port to this is Guasco<sup>1</sup> here is a River of Fresh water and a very good Harbor—Latt<sup>d</sup> 28 South; a Ridge of Mountaines of a Prodigious Height Runns a Long this Coast. Itt is a good Port and good Anchoring; itt's a Small Towne a Little Distance from the Landing Place; itt Affords many good Sheepe and Some Goats; itt's not a Place fitt to Settle in.

Next to This is Capioca<sup>2</sup> Latt<sup>d</sup> 26 South. In this Port is a River, which some time has Water and att other Times is quite Dry, but here are vast high mountaines and the Land verry Barrin. I coasted a great Part of this Coast from this Place to Port Arico, in a Boat to find Fresh water or a Safe Landing Place in Order to gitt Refreshment, but meet with Nothing in my Way Except a Few Indian Fishermen's Hutts. On a Sandy Bay A long this Coast are mountaines of a great Height. There are severall Islands on this Coast of no Consequence, onely the Spainiards fetch from thence the Dung of the Sea Fowlls which are here in vast numbers to Dung their Ground withall.<sup>3</sup>

This Aurica is a Large Port Latt<sup>d</sup> 19 South; itt's Inhabited by The Spaniards and their whole Strength (when I was there) consisted of a small Fort with a verry few Gunns on itt. Here is a Harbor as good as any on this Coast, In itt there is a Little Island behinde which the Ships comes to Anchor. The Towne is Scituate on a Sandy Bay, In a Valley att the Foot of an Hill; their is a Fine River and up in the Country the Soile is very good.

I have bin Severall miles up this River. Itt is to this Place all the Tresure of Potosi and all the other Inland Townes doe come, and upon this Account I look upon Itt to be a Port very fitt for a Setteltment, If itt was not for those Two Reasons: First the Bay is very Deep and a great swell of the sea falls into itt, and

<sup>1</sup> Or Huasco; famous for fruit, especially grapes, figs, and oranges, produced in the fertile valley.

<sup>2</sup> Copiapó: the river reaches the sea at about 27° 20' S.L. the town lying 10 miles inland. An oasis in the rainless desert.

<sup>3</sup> Guano. The fertilzer was used in Inca or pre-Inca times, and became the basis of a vast industry after Independence.



itt comes rowling In as Bigg a mountaine Towards the Port, but itt never breaks. This is the Reason that Ships once In cannot gitt out againe without great Difficulty and much Time.

Secondly by subdueing this Towne the Commerce of all the Riches and Treasure of Potosi would be Stopp'd from comeing this way, and that would put the Spaniards upon finding out a way to send them to the River of Plate, and soe to the North Seas, For I have binn Told itt would be as Convenient for them. But itt wold quite Ruine the Commerce of the South Seas.

The next to This is Ylo, which is an open Road but good Rideing for Shipping. The chife Trade of this place is Oyle and Sugar, which thay have in great Plenty.

I have bin many Miles up this Valley which I think is the Noblest in all Peru; I was once their when there was no Water att all in the Chanell of the River, but a Dry Land. Att an other Time have seen itt when a Boat of Six Oar's could scarce stem the Currant.

I take this to be a Place of Little or no Commerce therefore no way fitt for a Settelment; Latt<sup>d</sup> 18 South.

The next is La Nasca; in this Place is made a Great Quantity of Strong Wine. But itt is a Very Ordinary Port and bad Landing; Latt<sup>d</sup> 15 South. This is no place fitt to settle In.

Next is Port Chinchá or the Port for Pisco att the Bottom of which is a River of good Fresh water. Itt is an open Road but good Anchor Ground; this is a great Place of Trade. But mostly in Wine. The Towne is a mile from the Fort which stands about 20 Paces from the Landing Place which is on a Sandy Bay Latt<sup>d</sup> 14 South. This is not fitt to settle In.

The next is Lima, The Famous Metropolis of Peru. Itt lyes as I was Informed Three Miles distant from Callaio which is the Sea Port for this City and is very Commodious for shipping. In this City Centers the whole Trade of Peru. But as I never was in itt I shall say noe more off itt.

The next is the Port of Guara<sup>1</sup> which has a good Landing Place; the Towne Is two or three Miles up or Distant from the Sea: itt Trades in Wine Oyle and other Provisions for Lima; Latt<sup>d</sup> 11 South. This is not a Port for a Settelment.

<sup>1</sup> Huaura, another small port with the open roadstead characteristic of the West Coast.





Next to this is Virmijo<sup>1</sup>, a Sandy Bay full of Dead Humane Bodys; itt has little or no Freshwater consequently a Place not fitt for a Setteltment; Latt<sup>d</sup> 10 South.

The next is Sanca<sup>2</sup> which is a Large Open Bay and has good Anchoring. Three Miles from the Sea side is a Little Village which bears that name; itt's a very Poor Towne and not fitt for Setteltment; Latt<sup>d</sup> 8 South.

Next is A Port call'd Payta. A very good Port for Anchoring att which most of the ships comeing from Peru and Chilia Touch's to take in Refreshment, there being no other Port that lyes soe convenient to the Sea untill you come to Panama.

Att this Port there is no Freshwater But what is brought to them from A River some Leagues off. For which Reasons I think itt not a Fitt Place for a Setteltment; Latt<sup>d</sup> 5 South.

The next is Guraquil Bay<sup>3</sup>; that is a Large Bay with a Great Island in the Middle of itt Into which falleth the River of Guaraquil; up this River is the Towne bearing the same name haveing a very great Trade in sending Timber for Peru<sup>4</sup> to build Houses and Ships with. Itt is well Fortified and to this Place is brought A Bundence of Gold Dust from the great and Small Townes up the River, As [far as] from Quito a great City. This I look upon as A Place not fitt for a Setteltment, For you must goe above 25 miles up a very strong Currant before you can gitt Freshwater Or soe much as to sett your Foot on dry Ground, Both sides of this River being Mangrove Trees and Drowned Land. But if the Tyde make up to the Towne, you will sone be carryed there. I have benn above the Towne in A Boat when we Took itt; Latt<sup>d</sup> 2 South.

<sup>1</sup> Guarmey or Huarmey, where many mummified bodies have been taken from an ancient Indian cemetery on the edge of the bay.

<sup>2</sup> Santa, about 9° S.L., a few miles north of Chimbote Bay. Ships called here for fresh water, often unobtainable on this arid coast.

<sup>3</sup> Guayaquil. The island of Puna guards the entrance of the Guayas river, Guayaquil city lying upstream 25 miles. It was already large and prosperous, exporting cacao and cloth of llama and guanaco wool. The raid on Guayaquil mentioned by Wafer was unprofitable.

<sup>4</sup> Dampier records that when sailing the West Coast in 1684, in S.L. 9° 4' they saw on the 3rd of May, 'a sail to the Northward of us. She was plying to windward, we chased her, & Capt. Eaton being ahead soon took her: she came from Guayaquil about a month before, laden with Timber, & was bound for Lima'.

Next is Point Hellen<sup>1</sup> which is no other than a Sandy Bay which is Inhabited by Indians who's chiefe Imploy is Fishing; itt has good Anchoring Ground, But bad Rideing. This is no place fitt for a Setteltment;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  South.

Next is the Island of Plate<sup>2</sup>. Itt is a small Rockey Island and hath no Freshwater But what distills from a Rock—and that very Slowly; itt has very good Anchoring and Rideing for Ships; itt breeds Wild Goats. I doe not take this to be fitt for a Setteltment.

Next is the Bay of Bona Ventwras<sup>3</sup> Here is a very good Port. A Pleasent River full of Water and Woods; Itt is well Inhabited by the Indians whose Cheife Trade is Washing and gathering of Gold. Latt<sup>4</sup> 4 Degres North. This is not a fitt place to Settle A Collony In. From this I pas to Panama, in my Opinion their being no Place or Port in this Bay fitt to Settle A Colloney, itt being full of Islands, River Creeks &c. for which I Reffer to my Book.

Panama Is a Large Citty Situate in the Bay of the same Name, otherwise the Bay of St. Michaelles;<sup>4</sup> the Sea beats against the Walls of the New Citty; whatever others may pretend to the Contrary, itt is the Staple of Trade from Peru and Chilia For to this are brought all the Comodities which comes from those Two poatent Kingdoms and from thence are caried to Portobell and from that by Shiping to Old Spaine. If this Place was taken from the Spaniards and made A Colloney itt wold undoubtedly Dstroy the whole Trade of Peru and Chili and cut of the Communication they have with Portobell and Consequently ruine the whole Trade of Old Spaine.

This my Lord is a matter of soe great Importance that I dare but Slightly Touch itt, Least I shold be thought to meddle with

<sup>1</sup> The promontory of Santa Helena (Ecuador), just below S.L. 2°. Spanish captains called here to get 'pitch' from the petroliferous deposits, using it to caulk vessels.

<sup>2</sup> The Isla de la Plata lies off the Ecuador coast, almost opposite Jipijapa; favourite calling-place for buccaneers, with one landing-place only, on the sheltered east side, a clean sandy bay, fresh water from the high cliffs, and plenty of turtle for 'refreshment'. Near here Drake took the '*Cacafuego*' and a treasure in silver (plata).

<sup>3</sup> Buenaventura, chief Pacific port of the present Colombia.

<sup>4</sup> San Miguel.

that which is above my Reach; all the Grainerys almost both of Old and new Spaine might by this Key be Lockt and unlockt which with Submision I dare boldly Afferm as Fact.

But this my Lord is Humbly Submitted to your Lordships mature Judgement which can Easely Determine this Affaire, and give Rules to the greatest Pretenders of Polltucks in this Great Undertakeing.

Puble Navero<sup>1</sup>: Gulfo Dulce, Gulfo Propagalo, Porto Realigio, and the Port of Amapolla. Those are all good Anchoring Ports, Supplied with good Fresh Water, Plenty of Wood and Enough of Fresh Provissions. In those Ports and att Guaiavill is built all The Ships in the South Seas; onely some Few Barks are Built in the Kings Islands<sup>2</sup> In the Gulfe of St. Michells. In those Gulfes are severall Islands some of which are settled by Indians Accompanied with a white Spainard which Performes the office of a Priest, the Indians cheife bussines is to preserve the Fish they gett for the Spainards use. In those great Bays are A pritty many Towns Inhabited by White Men; there cheife Trade is to build Ships and Barks and Breed Black Cattle for Panama and for those Ships that are bound upon the Peruan or Chillian Coast.

This my Lord shall be my Boundery Westward, I mean the Gulfe of Amapolla which Indeed I must Confess I take to be to far Distant from Cape Horn, For the carrying on any Considerable Trade or Settling A Colloney att Presant. Therefore I returne towards Cape Horn, and take in my way the Gallopagos Island who are under the Equator and from the Mainland 240 Miles, Upon which I have binn and find those yeald good Freshwater and good wood, and good anchoring Ground att most of them, and great Plenty of Fish, Guiamas<sup>3</sup> and Sea and land Tortoises which are very good Refreshments for sea fairing Men. We sayled from those Island southwards to the Latt<sup>4</sup> 27, and betweene Three or four Hundred Leagues from the main land we see Terra Australis Incognita<sup>4</sup> and did very

<sup>1</sup> Pueblo Nuevo.

<sup>2</sup> Islas del Rey; or Islas de las Perlas (Pearl Islands).

<sup>3</sup> Iguanas.

<sup>4</sup> Davis believed this for some time, and convinced Dampier amongst others: Wafer had no reason to doubt it at the time the 'Secret Report' was

narowley Escape Ruining A shore upon one of the Islands, before Day broke, but this I refer to my Book. From thence we sailed to the Island of John Farnandes which is mountainous, and about 120 Leagues from the maine Part of the Hill are covered with Woods and itt is well watered with small Rivalets; there I met with the greatest Quantity of Fish I ever see. There is in the Island thre Anchoring Places all open Ports for ships to ride in. Two of them are but Indifferent the other is Tollerable. This I look upon as a Place fitt For a Setteltment to make itt as a Store House of all Provishons. Here may Black Cattle, Sheep and Goats be Easely Breed, and itt is a good place for a Look Out or to Sett Wounded or Sick Men on Shore, In order for their Recovery.

My Lord, upon the Whole Matter Seriously Pondered I must say I find no place more convenient for a Form'd Setteltment than Baldivia in Latt<sup>d</sup> 40 and Coquimbo in Latt<sup>d</sup> 30 or some other Port betweene them two. My Reasons are These: For att Either of these places we are onely 18 Degrees within the Cape, which will make a Speedy Dispatch in Trade, which will Enable us to make a Return within the Year, Haveing from the Begining of October to the latter End of February to gain our Passage In and Out of those Seas.

My Lord, to the Southward of Baldivia, there is nothing to be gott, for the Inhabitants are onely a Parsell of Poor Wild Indians<sup>1</sup> and have nether Commerce nor Trade, Liveing more like Salvages then Men; the Product of the Country is onely Wild Fowl and Wild Beasts. This I have from very good Hands who have been there and have brought some of the Indians along with them &c.

This Country Betweene Baldivia and Coquimbo Resembles very much our owne Native Country for the Land is mountainous and curiously Intermixt with Low Valley's and

written, but Davis knew better before Wafer's book first came out in 1699, and the mistake was therefore corrected. See note, pp. 125-6, for discussion of 'Davis Land'.

<sup>1</sup> Chiefly Ona and Alakaluf folk. Their condition has not changed greatly in the last 250 years, except on Tierra del Fuego, where sheep-farmers have won individuals to sustained employment, and missions have established schools and churches.

Champion Ground as itt is in Wales & the Climate is very Agreeable with our English Constitutions.

By Makeing A Setteltment att These Two Places, Baldivia or Coquimbo, we may Gain the Inhabitants the Chilians our Friends,<sup>1</sup> who are Inviterate Enimys and at Continuall Warrs with the Spainards, they are a Brave, Valiant, Genorous and Warrlike People and Very Populuse; there Country abounds with all Sorts of Riches as Gold Silver &c. Courtious they are and Free in ther Conversation, Brave and Thankfull to their Benefactors, and Bold as Lyons against there Enimyees. In a word I could hardly have Beleived this Character of them if I had not Experienc from some of them we had a Board which was Took from the Spainiards, who gave us a Large Account of there Country with the Vast Richis and Product therof; and we are very well Satisfied that itt is of Large Extent.

I look upon itt, My Lord, to be a very Considerable Advantage to New Collonies To have such Friends as them to Assist them att Soe great A Distance from their native Country.

As to Darian my Lord I have fully Discribed itt Already and the Scots haveing Settled there I can Scarce think there is any Room left me to Inlarge but Refer itt to my Book and the Following Sheets.

A Short Description of the Heads of my Jornalls Concerning the Istmus of Darian, Relateing to the Ports, Rivers, Harbors Islands and Bay's on the North and South Sides the Free Indians Inhabits:—

On the South side Coast the Spainards had no Setteltments when I was There from The Bostimentes which lye to the Eastward of Portobell till you come about 10 Degrees of Latt<sup>d</sup>. To the North of the River Darian all that Tract of the Continent being Posses'd by the Indian Natives who nere<sup>2</sup> were under no Subjection to the Spainiards, but some of them had some Comerse with the Spainiards and others of them was att Warr with them, Inviteing the Privaters to their Assistance against them. In the Islands are no Setteltments or Inhabitants of any

<sup>1</sup> Wafer referred to native tribes of Chile; Araucanians in particular were continually at war with Spaniards, maintaining large tracts of the South unconquered throughout colonial times.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. ne'er; never.



Sort but are Frequently visited as well by the Indians as the Privaters.<sup>1</sup>

On the South Seas Coast the Free Indians have A much Larger Tract of Ground. For from the River of Cheapo to about halfe a Degre South of the Equator makeing in a Strait Line without Reckoning the Bendings of the Coast they are about Nine Degrees of Latt<sup>d</sup> and near Six Hundred Italian Miles, their are no Spaniards Setteltments Except Three or four Small ones, One about the River of St. Marys and the Gold River in the Gulfe of St. Michall's, an other up the River of Bona Ventura, Tomaco River and St. Johns, all in the Gulfe of St. Michells. The Indians nere those Setteltments have some Commerce with The Neiboring Spainards, as some of them on the North Sea Coast have.

But those that lyes att any Distance ware Enimyres to them, as those betweene the River of Chiapo and the Gulfe of St. Michalls, Those of Each side of Port Pines, Cape Corients, the River of St. Jago &c. And itt is very Seldome that any Spainards Vessell Touch's att those Parts, The Isle Gallo being the onely Place Frequented by Them Therabouts.

The Coast from Point Garachinica<sup>2</sup> to Cape Corientes is a Bold Coast with High Land to the Sea Covered with Woods, haveing a Few Small Rivars but Scars a good Port besides Pines which is also farr from Exterordinary; from Cape Corientes to Cape St. Francis is all very Low Land to the Sea and Shole Water Affording good Anchoring in Oare or Sand.

And This Tract is full of Large Rivers but not Deep, These Rivers are Very Rich in Gold falling from high Mountaines which are Continued in a Ridge att 16 or 18 Leagues Distance from the Sea and Visable from Thence as far as Quito; and from Thence along The Maine Body of South America The Wild Indians who dwell A Long the Shore and Betweene those Rivars are Exceeding Savages, As those of the River of Darian are also said to be, and the Spainards dreed them very much; and this Low Country is covered with Woods as well as the High Coast to the Northward of itt.

Nottwithstanding the Feirsness of those Indians and the

<sup>1</sup> The San Blas archipelago is now thickly populated. See Appendix III.

<sup>2</sup> Garachiné.

Terror they really Strike into the Spainards who's cruell Usage of their Nieghbors they Seem to know and Resent I think itt wold not be noe Difficult Matter to winn them to a Corispondance by Fair & Prudent means and to Establish a Commerce with them.

As to the Citty of Panama itt is in the Latt<sup>d</sup> of 9 North itt Trades with Portobell. Portobell is a Citty on the North side of the Istmus of America to which Port the Old Spain Ships bring their Lodeing which is carried by Land Carrage to Panama and is Distributed Southward to the Coast of Peru—(vizt) to Guiaquill, and from thence up a Large River to the Citty of Quito and some other Towns. Other Ships from Panama carries goods to Truxillo, Paita, Vaura, Watcho,<sup>1</sup> Lima, Pisco, Ylo, Arica, which is the Landing Place or Port for Portici and to Copayapo, Coquimbo, Valpirizo, Baldivia and to many other Towns and Ports that has Great Inhabitants or In Land Towns belonging to them.

And From Panama goods are carried Westward to the Coast of Mexico, as to the Port of Santa, to the Port of Baptivova, Gulfo Dulcia, Gulfo Newga<sup>2</sup>, Gulfo Amapollo, and to the Citty Leons; in the Bay of St. Michell and in the Bay of Panama are many Islands which I have Discribed in my Treaty of the Istmus of America, some of which are call'd the Kings Islands. Severall of Them are Settled by Negroes and Mollotos, in order to Raise Provisions for their Masters which Live in Panama. From those Islands I coasted to the Southward to the Island of Grogona<sup>3</sup>—Island Gallo, and to Tomaco, Cape St. Francisco, Cape Blanco, Cape St. Lorenzo: and to the Towne that stands on Point Hellena to the Island of Plate, to the Bay of Guiaquila and up the River to the Citty or Towne of that Name to the Port of Payta, to the Island Labos to the Port of Santa, to the Port of Vermosi, Guaia, Watcho, Pisco, Callaio, Ylo, Arica to Mont Mornia, Copayapo, Coquimbo: to the Island of St. Maria to Island La Mucha; as to A Discription of any of these Ports or Towns I Refer to my Treaty as Above or to M<sup>r</sup> Dampire's Voyages Round the World. Onely this Advantage I have that I have had the Oppertunity to be on Shor att Coquimbo for Severall Days which If Desired I can give a very good Account off.

<sup>1</sup> Huacho.

<sup>2</sup> Nicoya (Costa Rica).

<sup>3</sup> Gorgoña.

The Landing att ye Port called Tongoye<sup>1</sup>, the Way up to the Towne, the Product theirow with the River that Ruñs by itt. And the same I can give of Arica being A Shore their some Time, and have been up the Country some Leagues, and of Ylo and Pisco and Vermejo and Lanasco, Guaiquill and many other Places which I can give an Account Off.

To Returne to Portobell which lyes Eastward<sup>2</sup> of the Place where the City of Nombrededios formerly stood, which is Against the Island Bastementos, the Country is under the Spainard, but the Indians of that Port heave their Plantations very Scattering and some Distance from the Shore. The Free Indians who are Continued from thence Further Eastward have their Plantations more close together soe as to make little Villages for mutiall Defence—haveing generally for that purpose warehouses in each Village. Nither doe these settle very near the Shore Altho: they often come downe thither From the Ground Plat of Nomb de Dios to Point Sambollos which is a Pritty remarkable Promontory Because the Shore from Thence bends more Southward.

Itt is generally a High Woody Coast with no River or Creek of Note but onely Port Scrivan, which goes pritty farr within the Land and is a good Harbor but hath a Bad Entrance Haveing Severall Rocks on each side of the Channell, Espeshally on the Eastward Side theirow and not above 8 or 9 Foot Watter on itt tho: Deeper Farther In. The Opening att the Entrance is Scarse a Furlong Over and the Two Points that makes itt are very capeable of being Fortifide as is the Land about the Codd of the Harbor which is very Fruitfull for Plantations and hath good Fresh Watter; the Land about this Port is Low for about Two or Three Miles, free from Swamps and Mangroves a little to the Westward.

From Point Sambolos the Land to the Sea is Pritty Low and Very Fruitfull Rising Leasurly up to the Main Ridgg of Hills which runs the Length of the Istmus and is in a Manner Paralell with the Shore att Some Even Miles Distance; att the Mouth of some of the Rivars which are hear more numerous but Small and Shallow the ground is mangrovy and swampy and

<sup>1</sup> Tongoy, a short distance north of Valparaíso, Chile.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, westward.

Exterordernary Large Woods with Stately Timber Trees which over run the whole coast like one continued Forest, and this Tract with the Neighbouring Islands affords a very Delightfull Prospect att Sea. Those Islands are called the Samboloses, many in Number but Small and of a very uneaqual Bigness and Scattered in a Range of A Considerable Length. A Long the Shore a Mile or Two from the Main Land they lye in Clusters haveing ther length devided in two or Three Places by Navigable Chānell which aford so many Entrances into the Long Chañell or Road which is made by the whole Range of Islands, and the Adjacent Continant Hear is Exalent Rdcing for Any Number of Ships; there is everywhere good Anchoring and good Landing in Sandy Bays, Either on the Istmus or on the Islands, which are all Low and Flatt, Guarded on the outside towards the Main Ocion with a long Riff of Rooks.<sup>1</sup> Att some distance those Islands afords very good Water upon Digging and are Plentifully Stored with Variety of Fruit Trees, the Soyle being Rich. Small Vessells may pass Amongst Almost any of the Islands. But the Chanell that Croses the Range Admits of Large Ships, tho not those Entrances att each End of the long Chañell, being more Shallow.

From the End of the Sambellos a Few Leagues Further Eastward lyes the Island of Pines, the Shore betweene being much the Same as that Opposet to the Sambelosos, but onely that itt is Rocky and guarded with A Riff of Rock off att Sea, which hinders any Ship from comeing near itt.

The Island of Pines is high Land affording good Trees and Watter and hath good Anchoring on the South Side with A Fair Sandy Bay to Land att. Near its Eastermost Point Lyes Golden Island much Smaller than the other and a Fine deep Chānell Lyes betweene.

Itt is a good Champion Levell Island, moderatly Raised from the Sea by a gentle Assent from the Landing Place, which is a Sandy Bay on the South side; but the rest of the Shore is Pretty Precipious, Quite Round and in Accessible, soe that a good Fortification on this Island wold att once Command the Landing Place and the Road before itt, which is A Very good one in all Respects and is Land Lockett by the Island and the Two

<sup>1</sup> Reef of rocks.

Points of the Neighboring Shore of the Isthmus, which opens there into a Bay. The Very Codd of this Bay is Shallow and the Land by itt Swampy; on each side there is good Land and good goeing on Shore and the Mouth which Faces Golden Island is deep and off a good Bottom; near the Eastermost Point of itt, which is not above Three or four Furlongs Distance from Golden Island, their is a Rivalet of very good watter. This Golden Island is without comparison the best place on all this Side of the Isthmus wheron to make A Fortress to Secure A Trade or Place to Land for a Passage over Land Except those places which the Scots . . .<sup>1</sup> made choise of to Settle upon.

East of this Doubling of the Promontory you Enter the Wide mouth of the River of Darian, but the Depth is not Awnserable to the Entrance Altho itt is deep Enough further in. The Shore is still the same and the Land within very Rich and Fruitfull but hath noe Harbor Besides Carrat Bay which is by report Indifferent good. For I have not been ther nor on the coast on the East side of the River.

The Land of the Isthmus in Generall is very good with varrity of Hills and Valleys watered with Rivers and Covered with Perpetuall Woods. The Southarn Coast of the Isthmus hath no Port betweene the River of Chiapo soe far as the Spañiards come and the Gulfe of St. Michael. Yitt there is very good Rideing for Ships all along the Shore. As in Generall in most Parts of the Bay of Panamia. The Shore here in the Main is pritty high with some Small Rivers that are Shallow, and have out Letts in Drownd Mangrove Land; itt is all Low Land about The Gulfe of St Michall for a great way up the Country, and there are many Large deep Rivers Fall into itt. The Spainards are Settled on the Middlemost of these; byt<sup>2</sup> Congo River on the Northside of the Gulfe, and that of Sambo on the South are Possesed by the Wild Indians, and Amongst Some of these in the Country more to the South we Shold Settle if we wold have A Port in the South Sea to Awnser Golden Island of a Passage Over Land.

Now My Lord I have given Your Lordship A Candid and as Concise Aucumpt (as this Great Matter wold beer) Off all the

<sup>1</sup> A hole in the MS. makes this word illegible: probably 'gentlemen'.

<sup>2</sup> But.

Ports of the South Seas I Frequented; itt is matter of Fact, which I have Related without the Embelishment of my owne Brain.

I am almost shure that no man now in all England can Contradickt what I have Asserted, but wheather Affaires be in a Better or worse State Now then when I was there upon the Spot I cannot be Positive. I have Also Impartially and Freely given my Opinion what Ports I take to be most Proper for a Setteltment and shold be glad to See any Mans Reasons to the Contrary.

Itt is True I could have Enlarged and Launched out in the Praise of Some Certaine Places or Ports, but I know in this case your Lordship wants onely the True State of the Affaire as itt Lyes in Truth and Fact that he that Runns may Read

The Rest being all Tautoligy and Supurfluous

I am my Lord Your Lordships most Humble  
and

Obedient Serv<sup>t</sup> To Command  
Lionell Wafer

## APPENDIX II

*The Expedition of a Body of Englishmen to the Gold Mines of Spanish America, in 1702, with the many strange Adventures that befel them in that bold Undertaking.*  
By Nathaniel Davis.<sup>1</sup>

Being sensible, that many times there is but little Credit given to Adventures of this kind; and that the bare affirming of this Relation in particular to be true, will hardly go down with some People, without better Authority: The Reader for his further satisfaction, is desired to take notice; that this is really an Account given more at large, by one of the Adventurers, of what was but very briefly and defectively inserted in the *London Gazette*,<sup>2</sup> of February 8. 1702 [3], in Words to this Effect, which

<sup>1</sup> The Nathaniel Davis of the expedition of 1702 to the gold-mines of Santa Cruz de Cana has been accepted as identical with Wafer's old companion, Captain Edward Davis. Masefield, for example, takes it for granted, remarking that he is 'sometimes spoken of as Nat, or Nathaniel Davis, from which we may infer that he was known to the buccaneers as Ned'.

I can, however, find no evidence that Wafer's companion during the cruises of 1683-8, the Virginia troubles, and return to England, was ever known except as Edward Davis; he is constantly so called in the many documents extant, and certainly signed the initial 'E' to the list of his goods impounded at Jamestown. Nor have I found proof that he went back to Jamaica at the time when Beckford was issuing commissions to privateers on the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession; if he were there, it seems unlikely that this seasoned buccaneer, a captain and leader, would have accepted the modest post in the *Blessing* that 'Nathaniel Davis' occupied; there is no word in the story that suggests his competence for a senior berth. There is nothing, also, in the narrative indicating that the author was long familiar with the tropics of the New World, as Edward Davis had been; on the contrary, his complaints of hardships, descriptions of Darien, of Indians and wild creatures encountered, are those of an astounded novice. Wafer, referring to him in the Preface and the Dedication of the second edition, speaks of him as 'Mr. Davis', not as his old friend Captain Davis.

Perhaps further researches may make the point clear; at present, although it would be agreeable to link the author of the story of 1702 with Wafer's buccaneer chief, it seems doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> The newsletter referred to was written from Port Royal, Jamaica, dated December 12, and published in the *London Gazette* for 8 February 1702; it begins with a brief account of the successful attack by British troops from Carolina on the Spanish fort of St. Augustine (Florida), continuing with an

shall serve here as the Contents of that which is to follow. That nine or ten *English* Privateers, had attacked a Place upon the Continent called Tolou (or rather Telu)<sup>1</sup> about ten Leagues from Carthagena, which they took, plunder'd and burnt; and that from thence they sailed to *Caledonia*, rowed up the River of *Darien*, and ingratiating themselves with the *Indians* were by them conducted to the Gold Mines of *Sancta Cruz de Cana*, near *Sancta Maria*; and that after they had marched nine Days, they fell in with an Out-guard of the *Spaniards*, of whom they took nine; but the others escaping gave notice at the Mines of their approach, so that the richest of the Inhabitants fled with their Money and Jewels. That however the *English* took the Fort and possessed themselves of the Mines, where about 70 *Negroes* remain'd, whom they set to work during the one and twenty Days they continued there; in which time they got about 80 Pounds weight of Gold, besides several pieces of Plate, which they found buried in the Ground by the Inhabitants; and that at their return they burnt the Town and brought away the *Negroes*.

*Davis's Expedition to the Gold Mines.*

In the year 1702, Colonel *Peter Beckford*, Lieutenant-Governour of the Island of *Jamaica*, having granted commissions to the four following Sloops to go a Privateering against the *French* and *Spaniards*, viz. the *Bastamento*, having 74 Men and 8 Guns, under the command of Captain *John Rash*;

account of the raid on the Cana gold-mines on the Isthmus of Panama; Nathaniel Davis quoted from the newspaper almost verbatim, but changed the 'twelve days' of the march across from the river to Darien to 'nine days'; and omitted a statement that the raiders numbered 400 men. After the word 'Negroes', where Davis's quotation ceases, the *London Gazette* continues: 'Some went further up the river in their Sloops, having a design upon another gold mine called Chocoe [i e. washings on the famous gold-bearing Chocó river] and two of the Sloops, commanded by Captain Plowman and Captain Gandy, sailed towards Cuba, landed near Trinidad, and with 150 Men took the Town, burnt a great part of it, and brought off a very considerable Booty, wherewith they returned to this Place two days ago.' Trinidad town stands on the south coast of Cuba, a few miles east of the Bahia de Jagua.

<sup>1</sup> Tolu, on the Caribbean coast of the present Republic of Colombia.



the *Thomas* and *Elizabeth*, Captain *Murray*, 63 Men and 8 Guns; the *Phenix*, Capitain *Plowman*, 56 Men and 8 Guns; and the *Blessing*, Captain *Brown*, 79 man and 10 guns. We set sail from *Jamaica* the 24th of *July*, in order to make the best of our way to the *Spanish Coast*.<sup>1</sup>

On the 28th at six in the Evening, they made the Island of *Palma*. And next morning, the *Bastamento* and the *Blessing* stood close in to the Shore; it being agreed that the other Sloops should stand in to the West-end of the Island; and about nine Captain *Rash* ordered the Canoe to be Mann'd and Arm'd, and went himself to see if they cou'd take any People in order for Guides; but at six in the Evening return'd without any Prisoners.

However, observing two petty Oagers<sup>2</sup> (that were cut out of a Tree all of one piece) under the shore, the Captains *Rash* and *Browne* took one of them, with an Old and Young Man in it, but no money. The other in company Captain *Browne* fired at, but could not come up with; so he made his escape. But for all this, our two Prisoners could give us but little Intelligence, for they knew nothing of a War; but said it was expected by the *Spaniards*. Neither could Captain *Murray*'s two Prisoners he took upon the Island, which were an *Indian* and a *Negroe*, give but little account of any thing we desired to be inform'd in.

Hereupon our Commanders consulting together what to undertake, it was agreed that Capt. *Browne* and Capt. *Murray* shou'd go into *Tholoe*<sup>3</sup> which is a rich Town, and Detachments to be made from the other two Sloops, which we left at *Palma*, one of the *Friends Islands*, for furthering our Designs; all the Commanders went with us, except *Plowman*, who was indisposed. They Landed on the 31st at Night in a Sandy Bay, about four Miles from the Town, and Orders were presently given to March, Captain *Rash* with his Company in the Van, Captain *Brown* in the Center, and Captain *Murray* with *Plowman*'s Men was in the Rear. Our Guide was the *Indian* before

<sup>1</sup> 'Spanish', i.e. Spanish-American.

<sup>2</sup> Petty Oager = Sp. 'piragua', from a native American word. A stout but narrow boat made from a large tree trunk, hollowed by cutting, and, frequently, burning. Spelt variously pereduger, periagor, &c. <sup>3</sup> Tolu.

mentioned. We marched, being in all Two Hundred and Seventeen, along the Seaside very fast, up to the Knees in Water, and I believe we were not above an Hour before we halted at the Walls of the Castle, not a Pistol Shot off, we having Orders from our Commanders to March close up to the Walls. We were presently challenged by the Centinel, who called for the Captain of the Guard, and fired on us not above one Volley of small Shot; they were answered by us in the Van in the same Language, after which we presently enter'd the Fort, they all forsaking it as they did the Town, without making any Opposition; we in the Van had like to have had much damage by our own Men's mismanagement. For no sooner was the Van engag'd, but the Centre and Rear fired in amongst us, and being dark, and not having room enough for six Men to march abreast, it was very good Fortune we lost no more Men than we did.

I cannot assert it for Truth, but believe Captain Brown was shot through the Head by our own People, of which wound he instantly dyed; one *John Elis* was shot through the Body, and likewise one *Edward Haggett* into the Shoulder, both of our Sloops Crew. We took care as soon as we took the Town, to set a Main-guard at the Castle, and another in the Church, and Sentinels all round it. Then we began to look about for Plunder, but the Inhabitants having some Intelligence of our Design, had two days before convey'd all their Riches into the Country; so that there was not left so much as a Silver Candlestick in their Churches, which was very mortifying to us, since we reckon'd upon the sharing near two hundred Pounds a Man. All the People we found here was a *Mulatta*-woman, and one Man; we took four Slaves, and redeemed four *Englishmen*, who were taken Prisoners by them in Trading. When we had plunder'd as much as we could, orders were given to fire the Town, which we did, and spiked up their Guns; but we could not carry them off, by Reason our Craft was but Canoes and Petty-Oagers, and hardly big enough to carry off our Men and Plunder. We embarked at two in the Afternoon, and no sooner were we aboard, and out of the reach of shot, but some *Spaniards* that lay sculking in the Woods, came out and fired at us, to show us they were not all kill'd. I cannot tell what

number of them was slain, but believe there were several, by Reason of our firing into the Woods and Bushes, whole Volleys, but could not see them, it being such a woody Country, and it would not have been safe for us to follow them, having a whole Country to engage with a handful of Men. About four the same afternoon we all got aboard our Sloops, and made the best of our way to the Island of *Palma*, where our other two Sloops lay; about seven we anchored there, and made ready for the burying of Captain *Brown's* Corps, which was carryed ashore, and interr'd on that Island, with all the Solemnity that the Place and our Circumstance would allow of. This done, they set Sail in the 31st in the Evening for the *Samballoe-Keys*, in order to joyn the rest of their Consorts.

On the 3d of *August*, we lost Company with the *Thomas* and *Elizabeth*, and *Phenix*, and in the *interim* it was agreed, that Captain *Brown's* Sloop should be Commanded by Captain *Christian*,<sup>1</sup> who was a Volunteer on board us; he being an old experienced Soldier and Privateer, very brave and just in all his Actions.

On the 4th at nine in the Morning we made the Land, it bearing North West about six Leagues, which proved to be Golden Island. On the eighth we stood in close to the Land, the Wind at N. we stood along the Shore, N.W. by W. in order to get in amongst the Keys, for there we design'd to Anchor.

On the 9th we saw two Sail, under the shore, and sending our Canoe to discover what they were, they proved to be the *Dragon-Gally* Captain *Pilkington*, and the *Grey-Hound* Captain *John Golding*, who had been treating with some *French* Pyrates on Articles; that if they would submit and come in, they should be pardoned.

On the 10th there was a Canoe sent ashore for Water, the Pyrates giving them leave, and to Wood also; they put up a Flag of Truce, in order to have Commerce with us, and several of them came aboard. We treated them very handsomely, but were forced to leave two of our men shore for Hostages. Most of them are *French*,<sup>2</sup> I think there was but one *English-man* and

<sup>1</sup> This is Captain 'Tristian' of old buccaneer fame, who had been living among the Indians of Darien.

<sup>2</sup> Chiefly Huguenots. Many of these French buccaneers were given wives

two *Dutch*-men among them, they being in all about 800 Persons. Their Craft is no bigger than Petty-Oagers, but they have done a great deal of Mischief, both to the *Spaniards* and all other Nations they could Master, and have been very barbarous in their Actions, by murdering of several that have fallen into their Hands. They have lived among these Indians ten years, most of them are marry'd among them, and have got considerable Sums of Money. They would have ventur'd to come aboard us, and stay'd with us, if their Pardon could be certain; for they seem'd to be weary of the Course of Life they follow'd. As soon as we got our Water aboard, we in the *Bastamento* sailed in order to joyn our Consorts at the *Samballoe*s Keys; we having agreed to meet there before our going out of *Jamaica*, from whence they set out five Days before us. Captain *Pilkington* informed us that the *Glocester* and *Sea-Horse* Men of War had been Engaged with the Fort at *Portobel*, and that they landed above three hundred Men from the Sloopes; but that before they could get into the Town, the *Glocester* spring of his Cable gave way, which made them leave off firing and go off; but Captain *Pilkington* the Day before had deluded some *Spaniards* off, making them believe he came to Trade, detained about seven thousand pieces of Eight, before they had any Intelligence of the War, and had got a considerable Summ more, had it not been discovered by one *Allen*, an *Irish*-man, who was Interpreter to the *Glocester*; and so our Design miscarried on that Place.

All our Company being met together at the *Sambala*'s Keys, the forementioned French Pirates came aboard us, and we sent a Messenger up to Don Pedro,<sup>1</sup> King of the *Indians*, to know if he would come down, and agree to such Articles as we should propose to him, to join with us against the *Spaniards*; he readily

by the *Cuna*, and lived on or near the river *Concepción*. In 1741, when the Spanish arranged an ephemeral peace treaty with the *Cuna*, 67 French-*Cuna* families were included. It is said that all the French persons living with these tribes were massacred in 1757.

<sup>1</sup> The first Scots of the Darien colony had met, in 1698, an Indian chief named Pedro, brother of Andreas, who welcomed them on the arrival of the *St. Andrew* and the *Unicorn* off the coast of Darien. Hugh Rose says that Andreas and Pedro ruled the coast from Golden Island to the *Pinas* river.

complied, and proposed to take 300 *Indians* with him, in order to cut a Passage thro' the Woods, for our Men to March up to the Mines; the *French* Pirates resolved also to go with us, provided they should have an equal Share with us, and (if possible) we procured them their Pardon. But an unadvised Word drop'd by one of our Captains made them decline the Expedition, and quite break off; however, they were so Honourable that they promised to keep the *Spaniards* they had close Prisoners for five or six Weeks, by which time we might have finished our Design, that so no Intelligence might be given of the Enemy. The King of the *Indians* continued aboard the *Neptune* with his Retinue; he is a very sensible Man, and was brought up amongst the *French* at *Martinico*, speaks *French*, *Spanish*, and broken *English*, and also writes it, which no other Indian can do in his Country, and seemed very desirous of a Correspondence with us; and on the 14th in the Evening there came 130 of the best of the Pirates, with the Consent of the rest, on Board.

On the 15th *Don Pedro*, accompanied by some of our Captains and others, went ashore, and Treated them at his House very Nobly, after the manner of his Country; they had Provisions very plenty of all sorts, but they had no other drink but *Mushlaw*, made of *Plantanes*, and *Chitty*<sup>1</sup> made of *Indian* Corn and Water boiled; the manner of it is thus, a parcel of Old Women chew the Corn, and then drop it into a *Calabash*, from whence they put it to boil, and so drink it.

On the 16th *Don Pedro* returned, with our Captains, and brought several of his Wives and Grandees to attend him, with 14 *Indians*, which were to serve for Pilots up the River in our Canoes; one of the Women was *Pedro's* Wife, who was very richly Drest, with Corals, and other Stones, which were put on Strings, round her Hands, Arms, Legs, and Neck, to a very great value. I was informed by Captain *Christian* that he had several Wives more, and that he had had a Child by one of his own Daughters, and that that is very common among them; it is their way, that whenever they Marry their Daughters, that the Father (if able) lies with them first, if she is a Maid,<sup>2</sup> and if the

<sup>1</sup> Chicha.

<sup>2</sup> Probably a misunderstanding of Cuna ceremonial. See Note 2, p. 96.

Father is very Old, and past his Labour, then the Eldest Son does that Office, and the next day all his and her Friends meet, and put them together. This Captain *Christian* is very well acquainted with all their Methods, for he lived among them some Years, when he was out a *Roving on the Account*, as the *Jamaica* Men call it, but it is downright Pirating, they making their own Commissions on the Capstane.

This done we set Sail, and on the 19th arrived near the *Barkadeers*, or the place of landing; the River we went up was one of the pleasantest that ever I was in, being very broad, and deep enough for any Ship to Ride in, if they could get over the Bar that lies at the Mouth of it; there were very Pleasant Trees on both sides, and all manner of Fish and Fowl in it. Parrots were as plenty here as Sparrows are at a Farmer's Barn Door in *England* at Thrashing time, and Monkeys like Flocks of Sheep on a Common, but we durst not fire for fear of any *Spanish-Indian* should be looking out and discover us. About twelve we turned into another River on the Right-hand, not so broad as the other, which brought us into a Lagoone;<sup>1</sup> about four we got into it, it being a large Bay; Land all round us, only small Creeks, which carry us up to the *Barckadeers* or landing Places, but no Houses near you, except it were Huts, which are built by travelling *Indians*. We landed about five, at a very muddy Place, having nothing but Swamps to march through, and but one Man could go in the Path, which was but just cut by the *Indians* for us; when we got out of that Path, we came to a River, which was full as bad marching as before, occasion'd by the great Rains descending from the Mountains; it took us sometimes up to the middle, and when out of it, had nothing but Rocks to climb over, and before we came to the Town (as they call it) we crost this River thirty three times in ten Miles March, and in most Places it runs so strong, that it is as much as a Man can do to stand on his Legs. Some of the Men tumbled and lost their Arms and Ammunition, and almost themselves,

<sup>1</sup> Davis does not say whether they sailed east or west after leaving the 'Sambalo's Keys'; but the description of a 'very broad' river, and lagoon, suggests that they went east to the Gulf of Urabá, and were conducted by land almost due south to the mines on the Tuira river. The account published in the *London Gazette* agrees that they went 'up the river of Darien'.

each having with him a Gun, Pistol, and Cartouch Box, with thirty Cartridges besides spare shot, Powder and Provisions, burthen enough for a City Porter, considering the way. We kept marching that night till it was quite dark, and then we cut Wood and built ourselves Huts to shelter us from the Weather; at break of Day, on the twentieth, we set forward to the Town after the rest of our Men, who had landed the Day before; and about ten a Clock we came to the Place of Rendezvous, where all our Men met together and lodged their Arms, only Captain *Plowman* and Captain *Pilkington* were ordered to stay with the Sloops; at the same time there was Provision brought us for all the People, as Hogs, Pickery's, Fowls, &c. a Pickery is a Creature like a Hog, and as sweet Meat. On the twenty first at three in the Afternoon, Orders were given to march, which we all did, down the same River we came up, but did not go above a quarter of a Mile before we mounted one of their Mountains; the Path was so narrow, that but one Man could march, and almost Perpendicular; so that we were forced to hawl our selves up by twigs of Trees; it was above a Mile and a half high,<sup>1</sup> and not twenty yards of plain Ground on it, so that some of the Men fainted and were ordered back again to the House we came from, *Don Pedro* having given directions to all the *Indians* to take them into their Houses, and to let them not want for any thing that could be got for them by Women and Children, left in that Country, for he took all the Men along with him. About seven in the Evening we got to the top of this Mountain, where we lodg'd that Night in a House, but not big enough to hold our People; the rest lay without, we being in all 482 *English*, besides *Indians*, of whom at that time they had no more then a hundred under *Pedro*, but most of them very brisk young Fellows each of them having two Lances, two Bows, and about twenty Arrows. They are all naked, having long black Hair hanging down to their Wastes, and a Horn which they put their Yards into, ty'd with a String, and a very large piece of Gold, with a Ring in the shape of half Moon, reaching from Ear to Ear, and

<sup>1</sup> That is, nearly eight thousand feet. No mountain between the Chagres and the Atrato rivers attains such a height, the highest crests of the tumbled cordillera of the Isthmus reaching no more, on an average, than six thousand feet.

a Hole in their Nose, into which the Ring goes; and for the Women they have a Clout about their Posteriors, and only a Ring in their Noses; they value not Money, for they had rather have small Beads, which are but of little value. Since the *French* Pyrates have been amongst them, they have learnt how to make use of fire Armes, but very unhandily. *Don Pedro* had a very good Gun and Hanger, and two or three more of the Captains, which were all I saw amongst them.

Next Day after a very hard march we rested at Night on the top of a very high Mountain, which according to my Computation could not be less than four or five Miles in height.

We had a very difficult march for the two following Days, especially by reason of the narrowness of the Path, and the rapidity and depth of a River we were forced twice to cross; and therefore on the 25th rested among the *Indians*, who for the most part live upon Plantains, Cassador,<sup>1</sup> and Beans; their Drink is *Chitty* made of Corn and Water boyled, and *Mushlaw* made with ripe Plantains boyled.

On the 26th we crossed the forementioned River again, and besides many other Inconveniences, were incommoded with getting up to a prodigious Mountain, which, I believe, could not be less than six Miles high. Nothing remarkable hapned next day, only that we came up to a *Spanish* House, in which we found a Boy sent from the place which we design'd to attack, in order to get Intelligence. Our march on the 28th was exceeding difficult, by reason of the badness of the Way, steepness of the Mountains, and the many Rivers we had to pass over; so that our Men fell sick in great numbers.

On the 20th we came up to a House where there was a Guard kept to look after us, consisting of a *Spanish* Captain and nine more, whose Orders were to give all the Intelligence they could to the Mine, whom we all killed, or took Prisoners, except one who made his escape to the Mine, and gave them an account of our approach. We lost on our side one *Indian*, whom we bury'd in the House.<sup>2</sup> This Day we marched over

<sup>1</sup> Cassava, name given in Central America and Panama to *manihot utilisima* (manioc or mandioca in South America), large-rooted plant of the Euphorbia family.

<sup>2</sup> According to the custom of the Cuna. Father Gassó in 1907 was



the highest of all the Mountains, and such a one as I thought Man could not be able to get up; I do really believe it could not be less than seven or eight miles high. Some of our Men imagined it to be within a Stone's cast of Heaven, and would willingly have tarry'd there, especially being much wearied with the Fatigue they underwent, and supposing they should never come again so near the blissful Region. We passed over three Rivers on the 30th; & being within two miles of the Town of *Cana*, a Spaniard who was set on the look out, was discover'd by our Forlorn,<sup>1</sup> and was shot dead by Captain *Goulding*; we got into the *Savannah*<sup>2</sup> (as they call it) about eleven, but such an one, as I believe, was never seen before, for we were up to the Crutches, going up to the Town in Mud and Dirt; several of our Men damnify'd their Arms and Ammunition. Captain *Gandy* and *Goulding* with *Pedro*, being in the Van, with about fifty *English* and thirty *Indians*, fell on as soon as they came within Gun shot, and our people not coming up as fast as they could if it had been dry, *Gandy* made a halt, but it was not above two or three Minutes, the rest marching as fast as possible to joyn them. The *Spaniards* seeing no more of us in number stood a small Brush, but discovering the rest, quickly retired from the Town to a Hill in the Woods; however, we took some Prisoners, and thence marching up to the Hill, which was naturally very strong, we quickly drove them thence, and seizing what Booty they left there, we carryed it into the Church, as we did next day, what Gold and Silver, with Rings and other rich Moveables we could get in the Town.

On the first of *September* we sent out a company of our Men, with *Spaniards* and *Negroes*, to wash the Gold from the Oare; the Mine<sup>3</sup> is on the side of a great Hill, above Thirty Yards deep, and several Caves run into the Hill farther than any one would venture to go; the Oare they dig out of it is a sort of a shown, up-river on the mainland opposite Narganá island, a 'town of the dead', with scores of huts covering the burials; on the Isle of Pines thatched houses form a cemetery for the San Blas islanders.

<sup>1</sup> Advance-guard, scouts (Dutch: *Verloren hoop*).

<sup>2</sup> Sp. *Savana* = flat ground, plain.

<sup>3</sup> *Espirito Santo* mine, richest of the famous *Cana* region. After Davis's raid, the mines were attacked by pirates twice, in 1712 and 1724, before the Indian rising that closed the territory to all Europeans.

mixture of Rock, which after it is dug out of the Mine is brought to the Mill, which grinds it small, and then 'tis washed, made up into the form of Bricks and lodged in Houses built at the Mine for that purpose, over which a Guard is set, with a Captain and Governour to see that the King is not cheated. After it has lain some short time in those Houses, then it is washed a second time, and so cleared of the Dross or some rocky Part wherewith it's intermixed till there remains pure Gold. They make a great quantity of Gold every Day they work; we made five pound weight and nine Ounces in less than a Day. Everything here sells at an Extravagant Rate, as a pound of Sugar at fifteen shillings, and so proportionably for all things else; they carry what Gold they make every six weeks to *Panama*, which is seven Days Journey from this Town. The Town was searched more narrowly, when we found more Gold and Plate.

Next Day our Scouts brought in more *Spaniards* and *Negroes* than we had already in our Power, some of whom we sent with a Guard to the Mine to wash the Ore, of which they made six pound weight.

We sent twenty-four *Negroes* on the third into the Mine, who brought eight pounds of Gold. Now it was, that we began to punish some of the *Spaniards* and *Negroes*, to make them discover where they had hid their Treasure; the Captain of the Mine (who was our Prisoner) we ty'd up by the Neck so long, till he was almost dead, yet cou'd get nothing out of him, nor the rest, whom we punished in the same manner; the Priests having it seems given them the Sacrament not to discover any thing upon pain of Damnation. But though we could procure nothing this way, we made however fourteen pound weight of Gold on the 4th, as we did sixteen on the next; when we thought it time to kill Beef, and other Provisions, and get Mules ready to carry our sick men over the Savannahs. As we were leaving the Town on the 7th there was an old Priest who could hardly creep, at whom *Pedro* fired his Gun, but seeing it had not done any Execution, he took up a great stone and beat the poor Fellows Brains out, which barbarity the white Men much disliked; then we fired the Town wherein I guess there might be about nine hundred houses, but one Church; it lyes

from *Caledonia* S.W. about sixteen Leagues; so that our design in marching so far about, was to come upon them undiscovered. Indeed, such a march was never undertaken before, by any, but some *French* Pyrates, who after they went some part of the way, returned again.<sup>1</sup>

Having got over the Savannah on the 7th we were three succeeding Days much incommoded in our march, especially with our sick Men; but on the eleventh, we got up to a large *Indian* Town, where we joyned all together; but the *Indians* were very unkind to us,<sup>2</sup> for we could get little of any sort of Provisions without ten times the value of it; so that scarcity began to creep in among us; most of our Shoes were worn out, so that forty or fifty Shillings was a common Price for an old pair; others gave as much to have their Guns carry'd; if we had such a Train of Women after us, as usually follows a Camp, they might have got more plunder than forty shares amounted to, for any thing above a Pound weight was so troublesome, that it was surely flung away; it is indeed almost incredible what hardship we endured, we having throughout the whole Expedition, except when at the Town, endured excessive hunger, travelling still over nothing but Mountains and Rivers, lying always in the Rain, for we never had it fair in the Night, and nothing to comfort us. Things went no better with us the succeeding Days, but at length on the eighteenth we arrived within five Miles of the *Barkadeers*; from whence Capt. *Christian* was sent with a Party of men to Capt. *Robins*, to see if it was possible to get the Pirates down aboard the Sloopes, but few of them would trust us; Capt. *Robins*, who was an *Indian*, and of considerable Authority there, having been disobliged before our setting out upon our Expedition, because he was not invited to dine with *Don Pedro* and the rest of the Captains, threatned to kill any *English*-men that came to them for the future.

<sup>1</sup> The French buccaneer Captain 'Bournano' had traversed the mountains from the Caribbean shore, and followed the tortuous valley of the Chepo; but returned without profit. His compatriot Rose (with Sharp in 1681) also attempted the Chepo route unsuccessfully.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Chocó tribes, on the Pacific slope; both Cuna and Chocó were indifferent to gold, but wanted the buccaneers to destroy Spanish authority.

Having got all things in a readiness, and Embark'd on board our Sloops by the 21st, the Commanders held a Consultation, wherein it was agreed, that Articles should be drawn to renew the Consortship for one Month, and that we should divide into three Squadrons; the *Neptune*, *Blessing*, *Edward* and *Sarah*, should cruize off *Portobel* for one Month, and the *Phenix*, *Thomas*, *Elizabeth* and *Content* should cruize off *Carthagena*, and the *Bastamento's*. *Greyhound* and *Dragon* should be at the Rivers Mouth of *Jacco*, till they all returned which was agreed upon in a Months time, and then we designed to go up the River.

It will be unnecessary as well as too tedious for us, to follow these three small Squadrons in their respective Cruisings; 'tis sufficient to observe that they met with no great matter of Booty, especially those whose Station it was to be about the Mouth of *Jacco*,<sup>1</sup> who in the space of five Months that they continued in these Parts, could never hear of any tidings of 201 white Men, besides *Negroes*, who some time before went up the river of *Jacco*, in order to trade with the *Jacco Indians*, who have a great deal of Gold, or to joyn with them against a rich *Spanish* Town in that Country; and so gave them over in a manner for lost.

Finis.

<sup>1</sup> This may be the river Yaqui or Jaque, on the northern coast of Española (present Santo Domingo); upstream lay the town of Santiago de los Caballeros, about 20 miles south by east of Puerto Plata. Or Davis may refer to the Bay of Jagua, south Cuba, near the town of Trinidad, mentioned in the newsletter in the *London Gazette* of 8 February 1702. See note, pp. 152-3.

## APPENDIX III

### *The Cuna Folk of Darien*

At the time of Wafer's adventure two distinct racial groups, Cuna and Chocó, inhabited, as they inhabit to-day, the belt of country forming the south-easterly part of the Isthmus of Panama. Roughly, the Darien region lies between Punta San Blas and the entrance of the Gulf of Urabá, on the north (Caribbean) coast, and between the Chepo river and the Bay of San Miguel on the Pacific.

The name 'Cuna' is now generally accepted as applying to Wafer's hosts, but they, or associated clans, have received many different appellations since the first European encounter with Darien folk. Cueva, Chucuna, Cunacuna, appear to be variants of 'Cuna'; Tule (sometimes heard as Yule) means simply a 'grown-up man', and was probably given originally as a reply to the strangers' inquiry 'Who are you?' Darienita and San Blaseño are regional names applied by outsiders, while more local appellations, as Chucunaque, Tucuti, Bayano, and Mandinga refer to groups living near these rivers. A comparatively modern instance is provided by the name Caledons, applied to natives dwelling on the banks of the river called Caledonia by the Scots in Darien in 1698.

Enciso, describing the people of the west shores of the Gulf of Urabá in 1515, remarked that chiefs were known as *tiba* ('iba' or 't-iba' is still an honorific prefix); ordinary men were *quynis*—apparently, the word now usually spelled Cuna. To-day the Cuna-speaking folk are divided into two main bodies, the sea-faring groups inhabiting the San Blas islands and the adjacent coast and the fiercer 'mountain Bravos' of the interior. The division seems fairly recent, for Bravos and islanders speak the same language and have similar beliefs and customs. In the islands, a certain modification of the traditional intransigence of the Cuna has resulted from closer approach to, and material contact with, the outer world, but the islanders possess the same spirit of independence and passion for racial integrity that inform their mountain kin and render the Cuna country one of the most interesting enclaves in the Americas.

Hrdlička considers the Cuna physically akin to the Maya of Central America; other observers regard them as allied to the Carib in speech and customs rather than to native folk of the Western slopes of the northern region of South America.

To the latter, however, is related the second racial group of





Darien, the Chocó, divided into the Emperá and Nonamá tribes. These people have distinct affinity with native folk of the present Republic of Colombia, as regards speech, physical attributes, and customs. They have lived for centuries side by side with the Cuna without intermarriage, and without mutual adoption of culture to any extent, although there has been ancient traffic in, for instance, poisons made by the Chocó for stupefying fish or animals of the chase; of salt, produced only on the Pacific shores; of 'ikorro' or other fibres, prepared by the Cuna for weaving into cloth; of pottery, herbs, dyes, and, formerly, of gold-dust and pearls.<sup>1</sup> The Chocó have mingled their blood with that of Negroes from the first days of the 'Cumarones' (escaped slaves), and now dwell on the Pacific shores of Panama, and along the banks of rivers flowing into the Pacific.

The Cuna, at the time of the first Spanish entry into Darien, were far more widely spread and more populous than they are to-day. Andagoya, writing of conditions as he knew them in and after 1514, when he arrived in Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien, says that the flat country west of Acla was thickly populated, and that in all this westerly country ('Peruqueta' and 'Coiba') the language was the same as that of the 'Cueva' (Cuna); the province of Peruqueta extended from sea to sea, including the Gulf of San Miguel and the Pearl Islands in the Pacific, and here too 'the people are all one, speaking the same language and wearing the same clothes as those of Acla'.

All the early historians spoke highly of the Darien folk encountered in the first years of the Spanish entry. Herrera said that 'the people of that region are the most comely yet seen'; Cieza de Leon remarked that 'the men are generally well made and clean, and their women are the handsomest that I have encountered in my travels through the greater part of the Indies'. Piedrahita said: 'The women are of good appearance; they go clothed in cotton garments curiously embroidered, wearing gold pendants and strings of beads about their necks.'

The population of Darien at the time of the first Spanish settlements was variously calculated at three hundred to eight hundred thousand. The islands of the San Blas archipelago were not inhabited by the native folk either then or during the buccaneering period; the Cuna seem to have drifted northwards towards the

<sup>1</sup> Linné found a quantity of pearls in a grave at La Gloria, a farm near the site of Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien, in 1927. Since pearls are found only on the Pacific side of the Isthmus of Panama, it seems reasonable to conclude that they were bartered or obtained as war loot.



Caribbean coast. When they found the littoral unhealthy (malaria having apparently increased during the last hundred, or hundred and fifty, years), the Cuna took to the islands as dwellings or rather dormitories, retaining their plantations on the mainland for food supplies, since few of the islands can support life.

With the establishment of Santa Maria in the Gulf of Urabá and of other colonies, some ephemeral, along the Caribbean shore of Darien, the Indians were presently exterminated or driven inland. 'The land suffered for a distance of more than a hundred leagues from Darien,' says Andagoya. The Indian centres were raided for slaves, and these, taken to the gold-washings, 'all died'. The remnants took to the tangled fastnesses of the mountain forests, became implacable enemies of the Spanish, and returned to the Caribbean shore only after the virtual abandonment of Santa Maria del Darien and the concentration of Spaniards at Panama, on the Pacific. Discovery of the wealth of Peru and the introduction of large numbers of African slaves were factors in saving the Cuna from extinction; and when Spanish attention was directed to gold found in abundance on the banks of rivers flowing into the Gulf of San Miguel the Cuna seem to have withdrawn gradually northward, into the mountains, the central plateau, and Atlantic-facing slopes. Between the time of the building of the first City of Panama, about 1520, and the visits of buccaneers in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Cuna were able to maintain the closed door in Darien. The Spanish path between Panama City and Porto Bello, well to the west of Cuna territory, was unmolested by the Indians, although not infrequently raided by Cimaroons; and though the native folk were ready enough to conduct English, Dutch, or French buccaneers to raid Spanish gold-washing centres, their attitude was that of defence, not attack. They acknowledged no official control by Spain, permitted no traversing of their territory, and received no permanent missionaries, in spite of occasional Spanish attempts to Christianize them. The 'apostolic' Father Balburger, of whom Gassó writes with enthusiasm, succeeded among the southerly Indians in the neighbourhood of his cure, Yavisa, about 1650; and the famous Bishop Piedrahita likewise won the friendship of the Chocó and mixed-blood Sambus of the Pacific slope. The Cuna remained impregnable, although a few boys, now and again, were seized, taken to Panama, and taught Spanish, while others freely joined the ships of buccaneers, travelled abroad, learnt foreign speech, and acquired shrewd ideas.

The period of collaboration with various buccaneer enemies of Spain covered at least fifty years, 1675-1725. This intercourse

resulted, after the turn of the eighteenth century, in the permanent settlement on the northern shore of a number of French (Huguenot) buccaneers, driven from their old haunts by the concerted efforts of international authorities. Married to Cuna women, and with half-Cuna children, these Frenchmen seemed to have succeeded in making a breach in the Cuna wall of racial integrity. It proved to be but temporary. In 1725-6 the whole of the native population of Darien rose against Spain. The gold mines of Cana were hastily abandoned; the cattle and sugar farms, and timber mills of the Pacific slope returned to the jungle. The rebels were led by Luis Garcia, a mestizo; and for the next fifty years Spanish lives were unsafe even in the regions of the Pacific border that had been subdued so long by the combined influence of physical authority and introduced racial elements. During this time all the people of French, or mixed French and Cuna blood, were killed;<sup>1</sup> and definite peace was not made in spite of an effort by Spain in 1741, when sixty-seven French-Cuna families were specifically mentioned in an abortive compact, until 1776, when the rights and liberties of the Darien natives were reaffirmed by formal treaty, which, however, proved no more effectual in pacifying the Cuna than the attempt of 1740-1. For the old idea of a chain of Spanish forts across Darien territory, from sea to sea, was revived. Pedrarias, two hundred and fifty years earlier, had had little fortune with the original strongholds; but now the Spanish authorities erected a fortress at Yavisa; at Molineca ('House of the Tapir', in Cuna speech); at the mining camp, the Real de Santa Maria; and placed an outpost at Ocubti. The energetic Governor of Panama, Colonel Andres de Ariza, cut a road towards Caledonia Harbour, and established the fort of El Principe, about half way across the isthmus, on a tributary of the Chepo river, in 1785. It was hoped that this string of defended points would intimidate the Cuna, for conditions remained as difficult as when Ariza, writing in 1778 to Galvez, Secretary of the Council of the Indies, had reported that the native folk inspired 'gran terror pánico', so that Spaniards dared not leave their dwellings to attend to their plantations unless six or more men went in company. 'For this reason the province is depopulated,' he said.

In 1788 a Spanish engineer, Colonel Milla de Santa Ella, entered Cuna country from Caledonia Harbour, visited El Principe fort, went down the Savana river, up the Chucunaque, and returned to the San Blas coast by way of the Tubuganti river; he saw 'wide, trodden paths' over the Cordilleras; and bands of the 'rebel

<sup>1</sup> Nordenskiöld says that this tragedy occurred in 1757.

Chucunas'. But peace was not secured until 1790, when the Spaniards agreed to withdraw all garrisons and abandon all forts save that of Yavisa. The Cuna had once more made their point of immunity.

In less than another half-century Spain had lost her American colonies, and the Isthmus of Panama became a province of a new republic. The Cuna followed political changes from their fastnesses, with shrewd appreciation of the result; they were undisturbed, and it may be noted that an attempt by the Government of Colombia, a short time after Independence, to colonize the region of the Gulf of Urabá was unsuccessful. The 'Journal' of Captain C. S. Cochrane, dealing with the years 1823-4, illuminates this incident, when the authorities in Bogotá offered grants of unoccupied land (*tierras baldías*) on the Atrato, and certain affluents, to English as well as to Colombian colonists. This scheme, however, would have affected no more than the outer fringe of Cuna territory, as in the more recent case of banana-planting enterprises.

A more serious danger threatened the Cuna when the opened door of the New World brought international engineers to the Panama belt, in search for a route for railway or canal. Surveyors crossed, or tried to cross, from both the Atlantic and Pacific; but in Cuna territory some of the strangers were turned back (i.e. Wheelwright 1844, and Gisborne and Ford, 1851-2), and in the case of the expedition of H.M.S. *Virago*, men were killed. The final choice of the Manzanillo Island-Panama City route, first for the Isthmian railway and next for the Panama Canal, almost following the line of the old Spanish highway, left the Darien folk in isolation little affected by the erection of Panama into a separate republic, or the creation of the Panama water-bridge. Well-meaning attempts to bring the San Blas groups into line with modern civilization disturbed them more profoundly than any other events, as the story of Father Gassó, and its sequel, shows. To-day it is as true as at any time during the last four hundred years that foreigners who attempt to gain a foothold upon Cuna territory are inflexibly dislodged.

The Cuna have thus remained less known than most American races, with the possible exception of certain interior tribes of Brazil, and rigid exclusiveness, accomplishing its aim of tribal integrity, has perhaps increased the racial tendency towards production of albino children. Instances of the association of Cuna women with other tribes of the Americas, or with Negroes, are unknown; and are rare as regards Europeans, although it is historical that Vasco Núñez de Balboa took to wife the daughter of the chief Panquiaco, when the

maiden was offered in exchange for her father's liberty; the case of the French buccaneers has already been referred to. The Cuna men of the coasts and islands have for centuries gone readily to sea in foreign vessels, exactly as the Miskito men of eastern Nicaragua have accepted similar employment. They never return with foreign wives, but marry within the tribe, thus acquiring the status of citizens, *tules*, with a voice in community affairs and ability to advise in the election of the chief and other officials. Such men generally settle down to the simple life of the tribe, although the introduction of gramophones, rum, and the idea of possessing money resulted a few years ago from the acquisition of the tastes and amusements of foreign lands by sea-faring men, on one or two of the more westerly islands. Sr. Alba considers that the San Blas folk of the islands and nearby coast may number to-day 20,000 to 25,000; the 'monteses' (mountaineers) are even less amenable to head-counting, but are unlikely to exceed the numbers of the islanders.

Throughout the entire region of Darien there are no architectural remains. None of the native inhabitants of the isthmus, on either side of the mountains, built temples to their gods or constructed any kind of permanent edifice; even to help in crossing a river the Darien folk did not and do not so much as put one stone on another nor fell a tree. In speaking of customs the past tense and the present are interchangeable, for it is true, broadly speaking, that what the Cuna-speaking folk did in 1500 they do to-day. Such records within historical times as those of Enciso, Pascual de Andagoya, Cieza de Leon, and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, witness the unchanging nature of Cuna habits. Native dwellings were made then as now of perishable cane and leaf-thatch; no stone was worked, no bricks or mud walls made. Fibres from forest trees or plants were woven into simple garments, cords, and nets, and the hammocks universally used for sleeping. Canoes are well made, usually from the light *balsa* wood, and paddles are carefully shaped; the Cuna are notably fine watermen. Weapons used in hunting or fishing were blow-guns (poison for darts was obtained by barter from the Chocó), spears, harpoons, bows and arrows (single and composite); but these have been supplemented in the mountaineers' regions by fire-arms. Small stools, with curved seats, are carved from the solid wood; simple pottery is made, by the coiling process; gourds and calabashes are used for food-vessels, often painted with bright patterns. The most interesting examples of the wood-workers' art are the little figurines used as spirit messengers.

Body-painting with coloured earths and forestal dyes is still

practised, certain colours and designs having ceremonial or magic effects; men, nowadays, go naked as when the Spaniards saw them first, in mountain and forestal interior districts, but generally wear, in the San Blas islands, the conventional shirt and trousers of civilization obtained from Negro traders or the nearest Panamanian village, El Porvenir. The women were described in the sixteenth century as wearing a wrapped skirt of cotton cloth, but no upper garment; nowadays a kind of long blouse is worn above the short skirt, decorated with intricate designs in appliqué (of coloured trade cotton material). These sewn designs have superseded older painted patterns, and these, apparently, replaced body-paint. Necklaces of small teeth and bones, seeds, nuts, or the dermal plates of turtles, are worn by men and women, many components of the necklaces having magic significance; finely woven and patterned head-bands are woven of 'ikorro' or cotton fibre; leg-bands, compressing the muscles, are wound tightly about the calves of the girls while children; and female babies are first given, when but a few days old, the first traditional nose-ornament of gold. Before Spanish times, the men wore gold ear-rings, and, when of high rank, gold breast ornaments. But visible adornments of the kind, and stores of accumulated treasure, were sought by the Spaniards, and no quantity remained in Darien after the early part of the sixteenth century.

Musical instruments, pan-pipes and flutes, are made of reeds, wood, or bone; rattles are made of gourds and hard seeds or small stones. The equipment of a Cuna doctor includes the skulls or bones of animals and birds, collections of aromatic herbs and roots, cacao beans, tobacco and the prized *akala* (or *akua*) *leles*, bright transparent pebbles found in rivers, the 'master stones'.

Food consists of wild forestal products, or crops from plantations of bananas, plantains, pine-apples, caimitos, coco-nuts, maize, yuca, sweet potatoes, cassava, or beans; fish from rivers or sea; birds, iguanas; peccary or warree (wild pig), armadillo, small deer, and other animals brought in by hunters. Everything is put into the pot together, with a flavouring of *aji* (capsicum) and, sometimes, salt. Surplus quantities of fish or meat are rubbed with salt, smoked over a slow fire, and stored.

All the small household property belongs to the women; and is typical of the estate of a semi-nomadic people, but lightly attached to the soil. There is no ownership of land; the crop, not the soil, of a plantation, belongs to the cultivator, and should he abandon his plantation any fruit henceforth can be taken by the first-comer: it is common property. With few artifacts that endure for many years,

frail houses built in a day, and no land ownership, the Cuna appear to be a fluid community; it was this quality of ready evasiveness that saved them from extinction in colonial times. A few hundred miles to the north, the vast stone complexes of Maya and Aztec held immense populations subject to great hierarchies; to the south, the palaces and fortresses of the semi-divine Inca overshadowed huge communities organized on a communistic plan. Aztec and Inca fell before the Spanish arms; but in Darien the native folk vanished into the mountains and left their battle to be fought by the deadly climate, the tangle of forest and swamp, disease and starvation.

The Cuna live in tribal groups, frequently including several hundred persons: isolated houses are never built. Dwellings are constructed of bamboo and thatch, in a rectangular shape, with high-pitched gable roofs (Sp. *de dos aguas*, i.e. shedding rain in two directions). The floors are of beaten mud; rafters are open, and from them are suspended articles of clothing, food-stuffs, hunting implements, and other personal property, thus kept dry and secure from the attacks of ants. Large houses may contain three or more generations. The head of this household-clan is the oldest male, the *sagila*; with him dwell his wife, his daughters and his daughters' husbands, their children, and if these have grown up, his grand-daughters and their husbands and families. The male descendants of the head-man have, on marriage, gone to the clan-houses of their wives, for the Cuna follow a matriarchal system of society, although it tends to become modified. A young man's chance of marrying occurs when the parents of a marriageable girl choose him; if he agrees (as he usually does, since women are scarce among the Cuna, and consequently prized), he becomes a member of his wife's family and subject to the rulings and arrangements of the head of the house. Fortunately, this rule is light; kindness and common sense prevail, husbands and wives are mutually kind, faithful, and industrious; children are well cared for. Quarrelling within a clan-house, with neighbours, or with other villages, hardly ever occurs; perhaps partly because, in the consistently warm and humid country of the Cuna, life is lived almost in the open; the houses neither hold secrets nor nourish intrigues. The community house often measures 150 feet in length, and 40 feet in width. The roof-ridge rises 25 to 40 feet from the ground, and a double row of posts, just below and parallel with the ridge, marks an interior thoroughfare leading to ever-open doors at either end of the building. On each side of this pathway small apartments are lightly screened off, like the booths at a fair; they are occupied by different married members of the clan, and the chief

furniture consists of hammocks, a few stools, and the family cooking utensils.

The Cuna own no supreme political chief. The social leader and judge of each group is the *sagila* (saila, chagla, sagala, saguila, sakla), who admonishes, gives out news at the evening gatherings in his house, apportions the next day's work of the clan, and appoints feasts. The intoxicating *chicha*, maize beer, may be made only when the chief appoints a feast; so that drunkenness, while permitted as a matter of course at official celebrations, is limited to these occasions.

While the *sagila* is the social head of each group, the *nele* (lele, lere, leque, nayle) is the spiritual head. He is more than a *mag*; he is the *sumo sacerdote*, the High Priest, intellectual and magical superior, and the keeper of traditions. The *ina-tuledi* is the chief physician, the master of physics, as his name suggests; the *absogeti* (iba-sueti) is one of his assistants.

The *kantule* (kamtule, comotoro, kamutule, contoolie) is the master of the large flute, *kamu*; he is the head musician, who knows all the magical songs; the *kansueti* (kamu-soedi) is the assistant musician.<sup>1</sup> Rivalry between officials seems to be unknown. The choice of the married men of a clan is said to be almost always unanimous, or at least the majority vote is accepted cheerfully.

Wafer thought that the Cuna magicians 'raised the devil', and other foreigners had an equal opinion of their powers. The Europeans ascribed sorcery to Darien folk, just as many races have credited primitive people, whose territory they have entered, with knowledge of occult things. The natives, it is argued, are in close touch with the soil, and with the local spirits or deities, beneficent or maleficent. They possess secrets which the new-comers cannot learn. The lawyer Enciso, writing of Darien as he saw it first in 1510, said that the inhabitants were 'idolaters' and that some of them thought that 'there is no other world but to be born and die', the one ascription confounding the other. The learned Spaniard knew as little of Cuna ideas concerning the spirit world as the buccaneers of a later day.

The Cuna appear to have a concept of a creator God, but he is a divinity to whom no prayers are said, and who never intervenes in the Cuna affairs of to-day. The culture-hero Ibeorgun (Olokuppilele, according to other versions), who taught the method of making maize beer, the use of gold, the art of picture-writing, and of carving and inspiring the figurines of ukur-huala wood, the *nuchus* and *suar mimis*, is closer to the life of the Cuna. But he is not worshipped.

<sup>1</sup> See Garay's *Tradiciones y Cantares de Panama* for detailed description of musical instruments.

The Cuna have never built temples to any deity; nor are altars or sacrifices within the scope of their ideas. They make no supplications to occult powers. The nearest approach to such an attitude occurs on the occasion of ceremonial chanting of magical songs by the official *kantules*, when hunting, fishing, or planting expeditions are initiated. A secret language is used for these songs by the *kantules*, and for this reason care must be exercised in accepting the translation of the words of a Cuna song as the actual meaning. As to the after-life, the Cuna believe in this condition, but think of it as enjoyed by a person's soul or *purba* in a replica, more agreeable, of life on earth. Some magicians say that there is not only good fishing and hunting in this future existence, but also marrying and child-bearing.

Nordenskiöld<sup>1</sup> came to the conclusion that while 'soul' is the simplest translation of the Cuna word *purba*, the meaning of the word is elastic. The heat of the sun or of a fire is the *purba* of sun or fire; the reflection of a person or any object in a mirror; the noise of the wind; the music of a flute; the sound of a motor, or of gun-fire; an echo; one's shadow: each is the manifestation of a *purba*. *Niga*, says Nordenskiöld, is the Cuna word for courage, or perhaps the ability to conquer. It is a kind of aura, and may be supplemented by certain means, as the wearing of jaguars' teeth. If, that is, the wearer knows the song relating to the origin of jaguars, and sings it at the appropriate moment. The *niga* of the Cuna seems to be comparable with the *mana* which anthropologists have adopted from the Pacific islands, although *mana* cannot be increased as the Cuna increase the *niga* of the idle or listless, by administering ants' nests or pounded ants. Another Cuna word, *kurgin*, is regarded by Nordenskiöld as the equivalent for brain, or intelligence; and the greatest example of *kurgin* was given by the culture-hero Ibeorgun, who lived eight hundred years ago. Both *kurgin* and *niga* are human attributes, but *purba* has a magic connotation. For instance, when the four sticks, plumed and painted, the *masartuledis*, are placed in the grave of a dead person, the *purbas* of the sticks lead the way to the next world. It is not the translucent pebble itself, *akua* (or *akala*) *lele*, that has a curative influence, but the *purba* of the stone. The Cuna man who wishes to be a singer of traditional songs is helped if he eats certain singing birds: the *purba* of the bird will teach him. In the same way, men are aided in acquiring foreign languages by the *purbas* of parrots, because they speak any language readily.<sup>2</sup> Turtle-hunters employ

<sup>1</sup> *La Conception de l'Âme chez les Indiens Cuna de l'Isthme de Panama.*

<sup>2</sup> To increase his intelligence, a man may lave himself with water in which scraps of the hats of *nuchus* have been soaked.



the *purba* of a diving bird. It is killed and burnt; the ashes are mixed with *pisep*, an aromatic plant with an attractive scent, and placed in a calabash at the head of the hunter's canoe, together with four cacao beans, and flowers of the coconut palm. The hunter when he starts out must sing a song asking the *purba* of the bird to charm the turtle by displaying bright colours, thus inducing him to approach the canoe; the turtle is to be assured that he will not be killed. Nor is he killed, although it seems doubtful if he survives, when returned to the water, the stripping of the plates of his carapace.

Every part of the body has its own *purba*, the total comprising a replica of the body. An old Cuna song tells of the death of a man, the *purbas* of his heart, his hair, his fingers, and so on, leaving him one by one; finally, the *purba*, complete and separate from the body, sits weeping at the very end of the hammock, desolate because the man must leave his wife, his house, and his hunting-grounds. In the case of the death of a man who has quarrelled with his wife, the *purba* of the quarrel must not be left behind.

Every animal and plant has its *purba*, but it is not, as in the case of human beings, an invisible double. Animals, the Cuna say, are very much like human beings; so the *purba* of an animal is usually a man, while that of a tree or plant is usually a woman.

The *purba* of a man or woman can be stolen by bad spirits, the loss causing sickness of many kinds. It is the duty of the Cuna doctor (*ina-tuledi*) to restore the soul. After concentrated thinking upon the origin of *nuchus*, he calls upon the good spirits, who dwell far away, ruled by their own *sagila*, in the forests of the Cuna ancestral home, among the wild Tacarcuna mountains. By the right kind of meditation and incantation the beneficent spirits can be induced to leave their homes, to approach the sick man's hammock, and to enter the little figurines placed under and beside the bed. Each 'little son' (*nuchu*) or 'little daughter' (*suar mimi*) is then instructed to seek the ravished *purba*; and if the sick person recovers, it is because the *purba* has been found and brought back; if not, the good spirits have been evoked too late. Nordenskiöld gives a highly interesting account of the procedure of the *nuchus* during their journey to the land of the evil spirits, of their adroit traffic with the demons, and a curious trick by which the *nuchus*, moving their golden head-dresses, overwhelm the demons with magic smoke, in the confusion seeking and finding the ravished *purba* hidden in a corner of the demon house. The *purba* is brought back to the sick bed, told that 'This is the body to which you belong', and induced by the *nuchus* to enter. The illness then disappears, the *nuchus* retire to their fastnesses, and the wooden figures,

the tobacco fumigant, and other charms which have been placed below the hammock of the sick person, may be removed. Some illnesses, generally those which are not immediately dangerous, are not caused by the loss of the *purba*. Thus, when the star *huagal* causes rheumatism, the *purba* remains with the sufferer; and in like manner the *iguana* may convey tuberculosis, and some winds are able to bring sickness.

When an epidemic invades a community the special assistant medicine men called *absogeti* are called upon to disperse it. Fifty or a hundred or more of the figurines, *nuchus* or *suar mimis*, are brought out and placed against the outer walls of an infected house, while others form an avenue leading to and from the village. It is the duty of the figurines to turn back the malignant spirit of the disease if he tries to approach. No particular veneration attaches to the little figures, which almost invariably represent Europeans, male or female, in dress which may be sixteenth or twentieth century in style. It is not the form of the statuette, but the wood of which it is made, that has importance, the Cuna say. The tree has been ceremonially conciliated before it was cut down; the wood is prepared for the spirit to enter; and when the proper songs are sung, the spirit will enter, whatever the shape of the figurine, whether it has wings and a top hat, or is dressed like an early Victorian or a Spaniard of a past generation.

Burial places of the Cuna are villages of the dead, replicas of the villages of the living. Huts, lacking sides, are built; the dead, with the small property owned by the living, is placed in a hammock, in a grave deep enough to take the two upright posts supporting the hammock; it is covered over, food and utensils placed near. The huts of the other dead of the same community stand near at hand. Formerly, both smoke-drying and preservation for a time, of the bodies of chiefs, and also secondary urn-burial, are said to have been practised.

The philologists Thomas and Swanton state decisively that the Cuna tongue shows no clear affinity with any other language, although it has 'certain leanings' towards that of the Chibcha in Colombia, in adjoining territory. Cuna is thus assigned a place as a separate stock. The speech of the Chocó, on the other hand, is plainly linked to the languages of South America, a fact emphasizing the isolation of the Cuna groups.

Wafer's record, however brief, of Cuna words and phrases, is of value since it helps to prove the localities inhabited by some Cuna tribes in the seventeenth century, and also the consistency with which

the Cuna tongue has been preserved, for much of the vocabulary remembered by the surgeon is practically identical with words used to-day. One has to allow something for the different literation used by various observers, as well as for different ears; for the Frenchman Pinart heard and spelled Cuna vocables in such a manner that they appear at first sight unlike the same sounds as heard and recorded by the Spaniard Gassó or by the Swede Nordenskiöld.

From Wafer's day until recent times, no traveller recorded more than a few words of the Cuna speech. The Spanish engineer, Colonel Joaquin Acosta, made a short list in 1820; Dr. Cullen, visiting Darien thirty years later with a view to finding a canal route, also collected numerals and a few other words from the native folk; but it was not until Pinart prepared a Spanish-Cuna vocabulary of several hundred words in 1890 that careful studies of the tongue were begun. The Spanish Jesuit, Father Gassó, learnt fluent Cuna during the period of his mission to the San Blas folk, 1907-15, and collected a vocabulary; and such scientific work as that of Nordenskiöld, Linné, Krieger, and Prince has clarified various mysterious legends that have accumulated about the figure of the Cuna.

### *Father Gassó among the San Blas Indians*

The series of letters written by Father Leonardo Gassó, a Spanish missionary of the Society of Jesus, to the journal *Las Misiones Católicas*, and published during 1910-14, contains the best first-hand account of life among the Cuna Indians since that of Lionel Wafer. The surgeon-buccaneer lived for some four months of the year 1681 with the native folk; the missionary, for eight years, 1907-15; but while one made notes as a dispassionate observer of Indian customs, the other set himself to overthrow them. To Gassó, the habits and beliefs of the Cuna were detestable; yet the sidelights shed by his letters illumine the psychology of this strange group of American people, and, after a space of nearly two and a quarter centuries, confirm Wafer's story.

Father Gassó, after twenty years' experience of mission work in South America, was in Panama, and about to return to Ecuador, in 1907, when the Bishop of Panama suggested a new attempt to convert the native folk of the San Blas islands; all Darien coasts and islands had been nominally under the control of the Government of Panama since the creation of a separate republic in 1904 severed the Isthmus from Colombia, but the region between Nombre de Dios and the Colombian border remained virtually free.

Letters from the Bishop of Panama, and Dr. Guerrero, President, were taken by Father Gassó to 'Charles Robinson', native chief of the island of Narganá. Robinson was depended upon as the one possible kind of link between the Spanish-American authorities of Panama and the intransigent folk of Darien; for he had travelled abroad in foreign ships, as Cuna youths have done for four centuries, learnt English, returned when twenty-eight to Narganá, married, and at the death of the old chief, in 1905, had been elected *sagila* in his place. Knowledge and *savoir faire* are highly respected among the Cuna. Robinson thought it well to work with the new republican authorities, went to Panama, was well received, and arranged to send a number of Cuna youths from Narganá for education in Panama City. Seventeen boys were sent in 1906, and with this friendly link established the time was believed ripe for missionary effort in the islands—a very different matter. Cuna lads are accustomed to travel, always going as bachelors and returning alone; but aliens are forbidden, frequently, even to set foot ashore.

However, the tribes had been shaken by old fears of foreign intrusion when the rupture between Colombia and her province of Panama occurred. Certain islands, generally those most to the westward, nearer Colón, declared for the new republicans; others, approximating the Colombian end of the long string of the San Blas archipelago, thought it best to seek continued Colombian protection. Father Gassó, when in Colón in 1907, heard that the *cacique* of Chachardi<sup>1</sup> had gone to Bogotá to appeal to the Colombians against Panama. 'The truth is that these Indians do not want to belong to Panama, nor to Colombia, nor any one. But they are ready to ally themselves with anybody in exchange for help in getting rid of the nearest intruder. And since, to-day, the influence of Panama approaches most closely, they seek an agreement with Colombia, just as twenty years ago they sought the help of Queen Victoria against Colombia,<sup>2</sup> and as, in ancient times, they appealed to the Dutch against the Spanish; to the English against the Dutch; to the French against the English; and, finally, to the Spanish against the French.' The perennial aim of the Cuna is independence, but opinions are sometimes divided as to the best means of securing it.

Gassó, sailing to the archipelago, tried first to land on Nusatupu

<sup>1</sup> Or 'Sasardi'. The chief was the venerable Ina (Iba, Igwa) Paquina. He left the island to go to Bogotá, accompanied by a magician, but both died before reaching their objective.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Claude Mallet was, in 1888, begged by Luis, a Cuna chief, who visited Panama City for the purpose, to hoist the British flag over the San Blas islands and to annex them to the Crown.

island, ruled by 'Henry Clay', created a General in the Panama army for services on behalf of the republican party in 1904. Refused admittance, he sought Robinson in Narganá,<sup>1</sup> was given rather embarrassed hospitality, and allowed to stay, although to the wrath of the local magicians, and, despite Robinson's influence, the deep vexation of the more conservative Cuna; for although trading had become common with small vessels from Nombre de Dios, no *comerciantes* were ever allowed to spend a night ashore. The honour of the Indian women would be attacked and the decay of secular tribal customs would follow, they argued with considerable reason.

Hence most of Father Gasso's difficulties, despite enthusiasm, tact, and Carlos Robinson. Beginning missionary work, coaxing the shy Cuna, he found that Indian mothers would readily bring babies for baptism, prizing the little scapulas hung round the brown necks of newly made Christians; they liked the ceremony, though they quickly forgot their new Spanish names,<sup>2</sup> learnt to sing, and came in numbers to the tiny wood and thatch church as soon as it was erected. The padre scolded when the women brought their perennial sewing, strolled in and out, chattered, and let the babies play on the floor, as they were accustomed to do at the evening gatherings at the chief's big house; but he was well served by the two bright little Cuna boys who quickly learned sacristan's duties, collected food, kept the father's modest house tidy, and lived with him. Gasso was not the first traveller to remark the Cuna lack of gastronomical skill, or to note that their chief idea of a feast was to drink enormous quantities of the intoxicating *chicha*. Vegetables, fruit (especially bananas), sweet potatoes, and maize, grown in the mainland plantations, were the Narganá food staples, with a scanty proportion of meat or fish, all thrown into the stewing-pot. Presently, when relations between the missionary and his unwilling flock grew strained, supplies even of green plantains failed, and starvation threatened; fresh water, too, was sometimes scarce, for there is none on this island. It is one of the women's duties to bring drinking water from the mainland streams, but in bad weather canoes cannot cross the half-mile of choppy sea.

Father Gasso called the island San José; and, when he eventually made an entry into the twin isle of Nusatupu, named it Sagrado Corazon de Jesús; the third group to receive emblems of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Naraganá, or Nala-ganá—'place of many bamboos'.

<sup>2</sup> Cuna folk often definitely refuse to give their native names to foreigners; such reticence is a safeguard against sorcery. The name of a Cuna must never be spoken after his death.

from the padre lived on Tupile,<sup>1</sup> later called San Ignacio by Gassó. On Nusatupu and Narganá lived about one thousand Indians, in large family-houses, built closely together to the edge of the water; hunting grounds and fields lay on the mainland, and, according to the well-organized social government of the Cuna, the chief work of cultivation, harvesting, gathering forest produce, fishing, house-building, &c., was apportioned among the adults by the chief during evening meetings at his community-house. Reclining in his hammock (the correct position of dignity), in the always open house, the chief receives members of the clan at seven o'clock, for the *tumati chumaque* ('big flow of talk'), smoking, arranging group-work, giving out news, advising, and appointing such celebrations as marriage, puberty, and funeral feasts. Cuna Indians never dispute the authority of a chief (chosen for life), and rarely quarrel; husbands are kind to wives; wives faithful, girls chaste, children obedient; the very definite social rules are seldom broken. Work, and the rewards of work, are shared; and the use of money, introduced into only a few islands, is discountenanced by conservative chiefs, since no man should possess more than another. The importance of happenings in dreams, frequently not distinguished from the events of waking hours, accounts for the great influence of the magicians in the life of the Cuna, and for occurrences otherwise apparently unaccountable—as both Wafer and Gassó discovered. The missionary's worst enemies were, of course, the tribal magicians, whose thunder he was stealing; but one *absogeti* ('Mateo') whom he converted, gave invaluable information about Cuna ideas and showed the missionary some of the curious picture writing. Father Gassó acknowledged the kindly qualities of the Cuna, but complained of their elusiveness and lack of regular habits; instead of going to bed at reasonable times and attending early Mass and evening services, the islanders held all-night *fiestas*, drinking and singing; or the women would spend the hours from sunset to dawn preparing food and drink for the men, who left the island before daylight on hunting expeditions. The children were nimble-witted, learning Christian prayers and hymns quickly;

<sup>1</sup> The comparatively recent peopling of Tupile is probably typical of the movement seawards of the Cuna folk. The Chief of the Indians living on the river Mono, menaced by the mountain Bravos, descended from the hills to the river mouth. But the mosquitoes and humid climate made life miserable, so half the clan went to a nearby island until it was engulfed by the sea, and then moved to Tupile; others went to Quebdi, opposite the river Azucar. In many cases the islands, when for the first time distinguished by becoming dwelling, or at least sleeping, places of the Cuna, are given the name of the nearest river on the mainland.

converts were readily taught to kiss the hand of Father Gassó and to remove their American-made hats when they met in the tiny narrow streets between the cane houses. Apparently, all went well for a time; and as a sign of increasing grace among the San Blas folk, the Island of Tupile, some twenty-five miles east of Narganá, invited the padre to visit them. But when, after a few months, Father Gassó and Carlos Robinson went to Panama to get further support, '*los monteses*', the intractable mountain folk, descended upon their island kin of Tupile, burnt the hut where the missionary had slept—for it was built of solid boards, contrary to the Cuna rule enjoining arier cane or thatch—and fought a naval battle with the Tupiles. Appealed to for help, the Panama Government sent the *Herald* barque and *Alfonso XIII* motor launch to patrol the troubled waters, and at the same time an official Panamanian town, named Port Obaldia, was established near Cape Tiburón, at the boundary between Panama and Colombia. Chief Robinson of Narganá then asked for means of defence against the Bravos, and was given a few rifles, the first that the islanders had seen. Hostility to Gassó was thenceforth emphasized by the conservatives. In the teeth of opposition, the missionary completed his little church and priest's house, although the sight of a zinc tank, brought from Colón to hold a supply of water for domestic use, nearly caused a rising of the Kardi<sup>1</sup> islanders, who were convinced that it had something to do with the Panama Canal, and would cause all fish to disappear from the Caribbean. The church was adorned by a figure of San José originally brought to the Isthmus in the days of de Lesseps.

Under authority from Panama, San José de Narganá was officially constituted a town, with Robinson as chief (*sagila*), and a deputy or *abarkineti*. An *alcalde*, mayor, (Cuna rendering, '*argala*') was appointed and, alas! a chief constable, with two police, to punish offenders, at the same time as an embryo military organization comprising four officers and twenty soldiers. Presently Father Gassó felt able to insist upon a daily roll-call of church members and punishment of defaulters; and to erect stocks and a pen for the wayward. Until then, there had been neither police nor criminals.

Murmurs increased. Robinson, with his authority enhanced, supported the padre, but still feared the Indian magicians and perforce held the evening *tumati chumague*: Father Gassó could not break down the ancient customs. What was worse, the fact of his residence on Narganá emboldened the unscrupulous. Negro traders, tempting

<sup>1</sup> The island of Kardi is named from the opposite spot on the mainland, watered by the Kala-di (or ti), 'river of bones', or 'stones'.

the islanders with strong drink and gramophones, succeeded in spending riotous nights ashore; if one stranger could come, why not another? Drunken singing, and the nasal chants of Portete, a magician hostile to Father Gassó, made the island nights hideous.

By this time the Jesuit had acquired a fair knowledge of Cuna, and was able to make himself better understood; until then communication had been difficult, for the only foreign language spoken (by travelled Cuna men) was English. But nothing could soothe Cuna feelings when Gassó denounced puberty and marriage ceremonies and tried to prevent converts from attending. He left for Spain, with a favourite *sacristancito*, to obtain funds and to publish his Cuna vocabulary; and on his return learned that his enemy Portete was dead.

The manner of his removal sheds light on Cuna mentality. A wizard of the Rio Azucar (or Quebdi) region on the mainland, a few miles west of Narganá river, dreamed that Portete had killed ten boys of Rio Azucar, and intended to murder all the other youths; so Narganá was invaded by Quebdi people, Portete was shut up in his hut and suffocated to death by the fumes of herbs. But other enemies had risen up. The church was neglected, helpers and suppliers of food no longer came to the mission, and only the fundamental respect for authority of the Cuna, and dislike for bloodshed, saved the padre's life. Hostile Indians came and spoke through his frail walls, telling him to go away, and repeating that they did not want to be Christians.<sup>1</sup>

The little *sacristancitos* had revolted, and the favourite, Estanislao, ran home; taken sick, he admitted his faults to Father Gassó, but refused to confess, and from his hammock warned his relatives that the missionary meant to bring people from Spain to 'mix blood'

<sup>1</sup> Among Cuna objections to conversion was Father Gasso's insistence upon a God of the whole universe; the Cuna refused to believe that the same God who made the noble Cuna would make Negroes; as to the white man, he was only made of the pale skin from the sole of a Cuna's foot. Purgatory and Hell were insuperable stumbling-blocks; they insisted upon preferring their own religion, with an after life, but no place of punishment. 'We refuse to go to Hell', they told Gassó, and therefore they would not be Christians. The Scot who went to Darien and wrote a descriptive letter home to Edinburgh, published in 1699, found a similar point of view among the Indians of the coast. 'I could never learn,' he wrote, 'what religion they have, all I could learn was they neither believe in, nor serve the Devil, as many other nations in America do; hereby they are not so much tormented by him as other nations are.'—*A Letter giving a Description of the Isthmus of Darien (where the Scots Colonie is settled)*.



with the Cuna. A native magician sat at the boy's feet, and the traditional wooden figurines stood beneath the hammock; if the boy died, said the old grandfather, Father Gassó would be burnt alive.

Refusing to be daunted, the padre suffered the assaults of prickly heat, fever, rains and tempests of the wet season, food scarcity, and hostility to suggestions; when he wished to bring to Narganá some goats, pigs, and calves, and urged the islanders to breed domestic animals, they refused at first to let even the padre keep such creatures. For themselves, the idea was spurned: were they to lose their hunting skill and pleasures? Cuna men eat little meat, and the women, usually, none; it is supposed to be harmful to them. But eventually a piece of land on the west coast of the island was presented by José Shec, remaining as a farm for the church until after the close of Gassó's ministry in 1915, and of that of his successor, Father Volpe. During these later years American women missionaries, teaching on Protestant evangelical lines, had acquired a foothold on San José de Narganá, and it was perhaps partly due to the publicity resulting from these efforts, followed by a succession of interested visitors to the more receptive islands, that led eventually to a new revolt and a renewal of the exclusive policy of the Cuna.

In 1925 the San Blas islanders, from their archipelago of tiny islands that lie on the Caribbean 'like water-lilies on a blue pool', rose in revolt, rid themselves of all foreigners, including Panamanians, hoisted the flag of the 'Republic of Tule', and were only pacified by the wise and conciliatory action of the authorities of Panama. The Tule republic is no more; but tacit acceptance of Panamanian control of the San Blas region was exchanged for the freedom from interference or presence of foreigners that has been the ideal of the Cuna from the earliest historic times.

## APPENDIX IV

### *Early Spanish Colonies in Darien*

When the heirs of Columbus advanced claims for a share in revenues from the gold mines of Darien, they were refused by the Spanish courts with the retort that the Admiral had 'never been there'. The petition was based upon Columbus' presence, during his last voyage, off the north coast of Panama: it was rejected because he made no landing south (or rather east) of Nombre de Dios, where, as he knew, he had been preceded by Rodrigo de Bastidas.

But it seems likely that, as tradition says, Columbus named Punta San Blas, the headland that subsequently gave its name to the archipelago of coral islets, four to six hundred in number, that extend nearly all the way from the Point to Cape Tiburón. Columbus reached and left Santo Domingo in July 1502, skirted the Honduras coast, and sailed due south until he reached a region that he called Veragua—the Spanish rendering of a native reply to inquiries regarding the name of their country.<sup>1</sup> Exploring parties found natives wearing a few gold ornaments, and concluded that rich mines must be near; Columbus was convinced that he had found the source of Solomon's wealth. The idea persisted for many years, until thousands of Spaniards had perished miserably in what Benzoni called the 'intensely sterile' Veragua region. From the Bahía del Almirante Columbus followed the coast, bent, hereabouts, east and a little north, so that the shore almost faces the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. Columbus' fleet, a quartette of wretched little vessels, met heavy weather,<sup>2</sup> passed the mouth of the 'Lagartos' (Chagre) river, and reached Porto Bello on 2 November 1502. Columbus gave this name because the harbour was 'large, beautiful well-peopled, and encompassed by a well-cultivated country', wrote Ferdinand Columbus

<sup>1</sup> Spaniards, punctilious concerning names and forms, did not always realize that many American regions had no permanent appellations. The land was the place where natives and their chiefs lived, and took, in Darien for instance, the name of the chief during his life-time. It was, simply, Fulano's country. Sometimes the word given to the Europeans, accepted as the name of a region, had no such meaning: the word 'Yucatan' is said to mean 'I do not understand you'; and 'Coiba' (Cueva), heard in Darien, meant 'far away', in response to the question 'Where does this gold come from?'

<sup>2</sup> 'I ran before the wind wherever it took me, without power to resist it', Columbus wrote in the Letter from Jamaica of July 1503. Hakluyt Society, 1st Series, Vol. II.

later. The land was 'tilled, and full of houses, a stone's throw or bow-shot one from the other; it looks like the finest landskip a man can imagine'.<sup>1</sup> This was the first encounter between Europeans and Cuna, who at the time appear to have occupied the country as far west as the Chagre.

Tossed by contrary winds, Columbus sheltered among and named the Bastimentos islands, where maize was found. Bad weather continuing, the fleet next entered a narrow anchorage called by the Admiral 'Retrete', 'the mouth of it not above fifteen or twenty paces over, and on both sides of it rocks appearing above water as sharp as diamonds'; but there was deep water within. Emerging on 2 December, the fleet was badly buffeted on an eastward course, gave up the struggle three days later, and returned to Porto Bello, 'ten leagues westward'; this reckoning makes Retrete near, if not identical with, Escribano port (the Scrivan of buccaneers), and within a few leagues of San Blas point. If Columbus gave the name, it was probably at this time; for on 29 November occurs the feast of the lesser of the two saints called Blasius. The martyrdom of the celebrated Bishop Blasius is commemorated on 3 February. On that day in 1503 Columbus was 150 miles away in Veragua: but in late November he was within a few miles of the headland, and probably discerned it.<sup>2</sup>

Limping west from Retrete, the ships were continually battered, the Caribbean appearing, says Columbus 'as a sea of blood, seething like a cauldron on a mighty fire', the sky burning 'like a furnace', while torrential rains assailed them. Two hundred years later, the first Scots Darien expeditionaries met precisely the same furious weather, typical of the opening storms of the wet season in the Isthmian region.

Columbus anchored on the Feast of the Epiphany at the mouth of a river which he called Belen (Bethlehem), a name still retained; and on the Veragua coast the Spaniards remained for three months, collecting gold ornaments<sup>3</sup> and exploring. The Admiral decided to found a settlement, set ashore a group of colonists, and then ruined any chances of making a permanent establishment by violently seizing the person and family of the friendly local chief,

<sup>1</sup> From the translation in Churchill's *Voyages*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Dates are a little, although not substantially, confused. Navarrete says that Columbus was at the small port afterwards called, by Nicuesa, Nombre de Dios, on 26 November 1502.

<sup>3</sup> Hundreds of tons of gold articles, many of beautiful design and workmanship, representing the treasure of entire tribes, went into European melting-pots during succeeding centuries.

the Quibian, with the intention of taking them captive to Spain. The Quibian escaped by a ruse from the ship's boat; of the others, taken aboard the flagship, a few forced their way one night from the hatch under which they were confined. The rest hanged themselves. Thenceforth the infuriated chief made a series of attacks upon the embryo colony, and Columbus was obliged to take off the terrified settlers. When he sailed away at the end of April 1503 nothing remained to mark the visit of the Europeans but the worm-eaten hulk of the *Gallega*.

The objective of Columbus was now Santo Domingo, but an easterly course was followed, 'for though', says Ferdinand Columbus, 'all the pilots were of opinion that we might return to St. Domingo standing away to the north, yet only the admiral and his brother knew that it was requisite to run a considerable way up that coast before they struck across that gulph that is between the continent and Hispaniola'. At Porto Bello the leaking *Biscaina* was left. 'Holding up along the coast' continues Ferdinand, 'we passed by the port *Retrete*, and a country near which there were abundance of small islands, which the Admiral called *las Barbas*, but the Indians and pilots call that the territory of the *Cacique Pocosora*'. The easterly course was followed for another ten leagues, 'to the last land we saw of the continent, called *Marmora*, and on Monday the first of May 1503 we stood to the northward, the winds and currents east, which made us lie as near the wind as we could.'

The name of Pocosora can only have been heard by Ferdinand Columbus in later years, after the dealings of Vasco Nuñez with the chief became known; the name Marmora, applied to a white headland from which the Isthmian coast falls away rapidly to the Urabá opening, survived for some time, a map<sup>1</sup> made about 1570, apparently from the notes of Cieza de Leon, inscribed *Description de la Première Partie du Peru*, showing 'C. Marmol' standing a short distance south of the Gulf of San Blas, beyond the river and isle of Pocosora. As for the 'Barbas', the word has a number of meanings, but perhaps the most applicable is 'comet'; Columbus may have been reminded of a streaming galaxy of stars when he saw the hundreds of fairy islets, palm-crowned, strewn for miles along the bright blue waters. But the name did not survive. During the following century various groups were called 'Cuevas', 'Cativas', and 'Cabezas'; and Wytfliet's map of 1597 gives the name 'Islas de Pinas' to the entire archipelago. No mention of inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced by Gabriel Marcel in Paris, 1893.

is made by early Spanish writers or by later buccaneers; occupation by the Cuna folk is a recent development.

Although Columbus may be credibly regarded as the introducer of the name San Blas, in discovery of the Darien coast he was forestalled. Following the admiral's third voyage of 1498, when he touched north-eastern South America, entering the Gulf of Paria, several competent navigators were given leave to explore. Vespucci, with Alonso de Ojeda, and Juan de la Cosa as pilot, coasted and charted large tracts of the present Colombia and Venezuela in 1499; Rodrigo de Bastidas, in 1500-1, carried the work of delineation a step farther, when he examined carefully (searching for a strait) every inlet and river's mouth from the Gulf of Maracaibo to Nombre de Dios, including the vast opening of the Gulf of Urabá. Here he saw the crags of the 'farallones' rising abruptly from the water; and from this region he induced a few natives to come aboard, inaugurating the voyaging of Cuna men in foreign vessels.<sup>1</sup>

De Bastidas failed to win due reward for his discoveries. He was shipwrecked, imprisoned in Santo Domingo, and did not reach Spain until September 1502, four months after Columbus had sailed on his fourth expedition, and nine months after Ojeda had received royal permission to explore, settle, and govern territory in 'Tierra Firme'.

There was reason for Spain to hasten physical possession of the hazy new 'Indies', whose Atlantic outline was emerging, but whose extent and character were practically unknown. Cabot had found the North American mainland in 1497; Cabral had touched at the coast of Brazil in 1500 and claimed it for Portugal; while Spain herself, though ten years had passed since the first discovery, occupied effectively no more than a few West Indian islands.

Ojeda was readily given a colonizing permit. But his attempt to occupy the province of 'Coquibacoa', on the Goajira peninsula, speedily collapsed; the fierce natives kept the Spaniards shut up within their defences, supplies failed, and the colony starved. Nothing more was essayed until 1508, when Ojeda reappears as a colonizer, with Diego de Nicuesa as coadjutor. To Ojeda was given the governorship of Nueva Andalucía, extending from Cape de la Vela to the Gulf of Urabá; Nicuesa's province of Veragua ran from the Gulf of Urabá (with the River of Darien eventually agreed upon as boundary) to Cape Gracias á Dios, Honduras. No inland depth was specified.

<sup>1</sup> The confidence of the natives was not respected. In 1504 Rodrigo de Bastidas (notary from the Triana suburb of Seville) went slave-raiding to the Urabá region, took 600 people and sold them in Española.

The dual expedition carried the best colonizing equipment of the day. In the well-found ships sailed artisans skilled in house-building and in the making and mending of weapons; chemists and surgeons, veterinarians and agriculturists, accompanied the colonists and soldiers. Horses, cattle, pigs, poultry, dogs, plants, and many kinds of seeds, were taken, with the idea of planting and breeding, in order that the settlements should supply a proportion of their food. Stores of wine, drugs, dried fish, flour, and powdered meat, were loaded into the ships at Seville. By special permission, Ojeda and Nicuesa were given the use of Jamaica, half-conquered, as a base for food supplies, and each governor was allowed to recruit 600 settlers and mine-workers from Española.

But Columbus' brother Diego, now ensconced in Santo Domingo city, looked upon these permits with a jealous eye. He promptly thwarted the utilization of Jamaica, and hindered recruiting in Santo Domingo. With difficulty, Ojeda collected four hundred adventurers, and sailed away without waiting for Nicuesa. As his agent for further recruiting Ojeda left the Alcalde Mayor of the new colony, Martín Fernández de Enciso, Bachelor of Law; and as a stowaway on one of Ojeda's ships came Vasco Núñez de Balboa, seeking escape from the creditors of an unsuccessful planting venture. Ojeda landed in 1510 near the site of the later city of Cartagena, explored inland for gold, fought a disastrous battle, losing seventy men, including Juan de la Cosa, and abandoned the region. His new objective was the Gulf of Urabá, 200 miles away. Here, on the eastern shore, he marked out the site of San Sebastián de Urabá,<sup>1</sup> and as soon as a stockaded fort was built, began to raid for gold and slaves, quickly goading the native folk to fury. Benzoni says that when the Indians realized the Spaniards' greed they threw down golden ornaments in the forest paths, 'and while they were picking them up, the natives aimed poisoned darts from their hiding places, and so wounded many'. Ojeda himself was injured by an envenomed dart thrown by a chief who sought an interview ostensibly to ransom his captured wife; the Spaniard recovered temporarily, but eventually died of the wound in Española.

Before long the Spaniards were practically shut up inside their stockade, and food ran short. Weary of waiting for Enciso and supplies, Ojeda took advantage of the entry of a small vessel captained by one Talavera<sup>2</sup> to seek aid in person, leaving Francisco Pizarro in charge.

<sup>1</sup> Later, Alonso de Heredia founded a new town, San Sebastián de Buena Vista, on a hill a few miles nearer the opening of the gulf.

<sup>2</sup> Bernardo de Talavera was a Spaniard, but was eventually caught and

Ill luck still dogged him; ship-wrecked off Cuba, he reached Santo Domingo only to find that Enciso had already sailed, unaware of the transference of the colony. The condition of San Sebastian meanwhile grew more hopeless, and after two months Pizarro embarked the survivors in his two remaining vessels. One was wrecked near the entrance of the gulf; the other reached Nueva Andalucia, found Enciso, and with him began the return journey to the Gulf of Urabá. Off Point Caribana the ship carrying provisions was lost; and the party reached the site of San Sebastian to find the town destroyed by the natives. Leadership, in Ojeda's absence, devolved upon Enciso, and he was presently persuaded by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa to leave this region of warlike Indians and to cross to the west side of the gulf, where poisoned arrows were not used by the gentler native folk, 'the flower', said Cieza de Leon, 'of the Indians in these parts'. A town belonging to the chief Cemaco was attacked and conquered, the cane houses burnt or occupied by the Europeans, and Spanish goods transferred to this site on the west shore of the Gulf of Urabá. The first Spanish settlement on the Isthmus was thus founded. It stood at or near the mouth of a little river called Tarena, running into the gulf, and from this name the word Darien—with all its variants—seems to have been developed; although, as in the case of so much Isthmian nomenclature, the derivation is disputed. The new town was called Santa Maria (or Nuestra Señora) la Antigua del Darien, and Peter Martyr gives a circumstantial account of the Spanish attack on the natives of the place and Enciso's vow 'to the image of the blessed virgin which is honoured in Civile by the name of Sancta Maria Antiqua, promising to send her many golden gifts and to name the village by her name'. When the natives had been routed, stores of gold ornaments were found hidden among the reeds by the river, and 'cloth made of silke or cotton of the gossampine tree'.

The transfer proved the undoing of the lawyer Enciso. For when he declared illegal all traffic with the natives for gold except on the part of civic authorities, soldiers and settlers became mutinous. Vasco Nuñez was applauded when he said that no obedience was due to Enciso since the west side of the gulf was not under his jurisdiction, but that of Nicuesa. It is difficult to understand how such a stickler for formalities as Enciso could have overlooked this point. He was promptly deposed, and Vasco Nuñez, joint alcalde with one Zamudio, and with Valdivia as regidor, established a town

hanged as a pirate by the Spanish authorities in Jamaica in 1511; none but persons sailing from Seville, with official permission, were within the law.

government. To regularize his position, Vasco Nuñez despatched a search party for Nicuesa, in whose name he had acted. It was supposed that somewhere to the westward he had established his government, so, when Colmenares<sup>1</sup> arrived in mid-November 1510, with supplies from Santo Domingo, he was sent to discover the whereabouts of Enciso and to proffer the governorship of the colony congregated at Santa Maria.

Nicuesa was found at the drenched green harbour where he had cried 'Paremos aqui en el Nombre de Dios', in serious straits;<sup>2</sup> his surviving sixty colonists were sick and starving, after a series of terrible experiences, and he was using brutally autocratic methods to subdue murmurs. A relative of one of Vasco Nuñez' envoys, the distinguished Lope de Olano, was found chained to a grindstone, and Nicuesa, although almost in tears of joy when the rescuers appeared, soon changed his attitude, and when informed of Enciso's legal attitude regarding the collection of gold by private individuals, said that his views were similar. This indiscreet statement sealed his fate. Colmenares hastened back to Santa Maria in advance, to bring the news, and the story of Nicuesa's arbitrary attitude was received with consternation. What was there but the chance of amassing private fortunes to keep settlers in Darien?

So, when the ship with Nicuesa on board sailed into the harbour—Puerto Hermosa, a few miles north of the river Tarena—the colony had already decided not to receive him. He was never allowed to enter Santa Maria town. Sent aboard a small and unseaworthy vessel, with seventeen adherents, after he left the Gulf of Urabá on 1 March 1511, Nicuesa was never heard of again. Enciso was deported shortly afterwards, reached Spain safely, and thenceforward showed himself the bitter enemy of Vasco Nuñez.<sup>3</sup>

This enterprising Spaniard kept Santa Maria alive, and ruled it with activity and ability for three years. It cannot be said that he did not raid the Indians for treasure; but he seems to have used

<sup>1</sup> Peter Martyr says that Colmenares brought 'three score freshe men, and great plentie of victual and apparel'. He was led to Santa Maria by the bonfires lighted by the Darien colony in response to Colmenares' guns, and came just in time to aid 'those wretched and miserable men of Darien, which now through famyne and feebleness helde their wearie soules in their teeth, ready to depart from their bodies'.

<sup>2</sup> Nicuesa, says Peter Martyr, appeared to Colmenares 'of all living men most unfortunate, dried up with extreme hunger, filthy and horrible to behold.'

<sup>3</sup> Enciso's *Suma de Geografia*, first published in 1519, contains succinct information about Darien. See Hakluyt Society, Series II, vol. lxix.



discreet methods and to have conciliated where possible. He was certainly successful in making a number of firm friendships among the Cuna Indians. Another link was made when he took the daughter of the nearby chief Careta to wife. Captured treacherously with all his family, and taken to Santa Maria, the chief offered the girl in exchange for liberty. Vasco Nuñez kept the agreement, and the unswerving amity of his father-in-law; what is more, he was devoted to his little Cuna wife to the day of his death.

The official position of Vasco Nuñez was precarious. However remote his settlement, the long arm of Spain was likely to find him and to punish breaches of strict legality. He tried to regularize his status, first with gold-sweetened letters despatched by his friend Valdivia to Diego Columbus in Santo Domingo, and next by sending Zamudio as his envoy to Spain. When he wrote a letter to the King of Spain on 20 January 1513 he had something to say that demanded the attention of a pre-occupied monarch, for not only could he report the exploration of thirty gold-bearing rivers in the Darien region, but he had news of a great uncharted sea lying to the south. This was the first tidings Europe heard of the Pacific Ocean, and it proved the existence of what Spain wanted, a 'path to the east by way of the west'.

Vasco Nuñez told the King that the friendly chief Comogre spoke of this sea as 'very good for navigation, for it is always smooth'. But on the way, said Comogre, was the territory of the inimical Tubanamá; would the Spaniards overthrow him as they had already helped to chastise Ponca?

Vasco Nuñez presently received a satisfactory reply from Diego Colón; he sent a commission granting the governorship of Santa Maria, and a shipload of provisions. For Darien could not feed the Europeans. The Indians had but small stores of food; and the colony could not or at least did not plant sufficient crops. Plantains and cassava proved unsatisfactory as staple foods, and meat was lacking. It was thus imperative to keep on good terms with Santo Domingo, and Vasco Nuñez sent another party, headed by Valdivia, carrying 15,000 pesos of gold. This vessel was wrecked off the coast of Yucatan, Valdivia and 20 men escaping in a small boat. Some died of

<sup>1</sup> Vasco Nuñez owed news of the Pacific to Panquiaco, son of Comogre. In Comogre's palace, Panquiaco beheld the Spaniards quarrelling over the division of 4,000 ounces of gold he had brought them as a gift, and told them that six days' journey away, over the mountains, was a sea where ships sailed, and towns with much wealth, where 'all the gold you want' could be procured. This was not only the first hint of the Pacific Ocean, but of the existence of the wealthy cities of the Inca of Peru.

thirst. The rest were taken by the Yucatec, and Valdivia, with four others, was ceremonially sacrificed. The sailor Gonzalo Guerrero and a friar, Geronimo de Aguilar, survived, and were seen by Spaniards many years later. The sailor refused to leave his native wife, but the friar was taken off by Cortés, and, having learnt Maya customs and speech, gave invaluable help in the conquest of Mexico.

Vasco Nuñez, troubled by Valdivia's disappearance, sent Colmenares and Caicedo to Spain, with more gold, to give first-hand accounts of explorations; for the fabulous Dabaibe (somewhere along the upper reaches of the Darien (Atrato) river), had been heard of, with its golden palaces, and the Spaniards of Santa Maria had acquired a good idea of the surrounding country. But Vasco Nuñez' friends reached Spain too late; the King, affected by Enciso's denunciations, had already given the government of 'Castilla del Oro' to the elderly courtier Pedro Arias de Avila.

Warned by letters, Vasco Nuñez determined on a bold stroke. To the discoverer of the sea-route to India much would be forgiven. He would examine the truth of Panquiaco's story. He set out, not up the valley of the Atrato, for as he wrote to the King, 'the people who wander along the upper course of this great river are evil and warlike', but west to the territory of Careta. The chief gave him food and guides, and directed him to start from a clean sandy bay, into which ran a navigable river;<sup>1</sup> thence he was to cross a mountain range and follow another stream communicating with a great river running into the sea. In this bay Vasco Nuñez made his camp, starting out on 6 September 1513, with 190 Spaniards and 1,000 natives. They had also a pack of large dogs, among them the famous Leoncico, creole-born, with a red coat and black muzzle. This dog, trained to attack Indians, was considered to be worth an armed soldier in war; his master drew for him a captain's pay and share of spoils. He died of poison.

It seems reasonably certain that the route of the discoverer of the Pacific was the same, or nearly the same, as that by which Wafer's party was conducted across the Isthmus in 1680. On 8 September Vasco Nuñez reached the territory of Ponca, to find the chief's town abandoned. Presents and conciliatory messages were sent, and gifts of gold ornaments came in return, as well as a relay of guides with route-directions. Despite Ponca's wariness, the Spaniards felt sufficient confidence to leave their sick men behind in his care. The march was resumed on 20 September, and four days later the expedition was climbing mountains from which, the Indian guides said, the

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Acla or 'Agla-Senequa', or the Agla-tumati.

sea might be seen. A battle was fought on a high plain in the hills with the hostile chief of Quarequá, when 600 natives were killed, numbers of prisoners taken, and food and gold found. On the eighteenth day of the march, 25 September, Vasco Nuñez and 67 of his party rose very early, and with their swords cut a passage through the jungle covering the mountain from which a view of the sea was promised. Vasco Nuñez had a keen sense of the importance of the sight, and when near the summit he called a halt and climbed to the top alone. The Pacific lay shimmering below, a line of blue, beyond the tangled woods flowing southward. Prayers were said, a cross set up, the name of the King of Spain cut on trees, the *Te Deum* sung. Vasco Nuñez formally 'took possession', in the name of the King, of the South Sea; and the notary, Andres de Valderrabano, drew up a record, which every one signed.<sup>1</sup>

Before the sea-border was reached another battle was fought, with Chiapes, who, upon his defeat, gave tribute of 500 pounds' weight of gold. The Spaniards divided into three parties when approaching the shore, screened by thick jungle. Alonso Martin found an inlet on 27 September, and returned to inform Vasco Nuñez; the latter arrived at the spot on 28 September, but the tide was out. So, waiting until high tide on the following day,<sup>2</sup> he marched into the water in full armour, with banner and sword, proclaiming the King of Spain's ownership of the 'Sea of the South'.<sup>3</sup> Before returning he made a perilous series of coasting journeys in native canoes, gathering rich stores of gold. Pearls in quantity were obtained, too; Chief Tumaco gave Vasco Nuñez 96 ounces of fine pearls, showed him the Pearl Islands in Panama Bay, and complained of the enmity of the island chiefs, a hint that was taken later with results tragic for the islanders. Tumaco told also of a rich land farther south, and modelled one of the strange quadrupeds of the country. It was a Peruvian llama, the only beast of burden of the Americas.

Guided to the deepest part of the Gulf of San Miguel, the return journey was begun by way of the Savana river, but before reaching the farther side of the Isthmus several more encounters with native chiefs occurred. Teoca, 'pacified', gave food and lent his son as a guide to much-needed springs of water in a cool green valley; Poncra,

<sup>1</sup> Oviedo has preserved all the names. They include that of the priest, Andres de Vera; Francisco Pizarro, future conqueror of Peru; Francisco de Lantin, a Sicilian; and Nuflo de Olano, a Negro.

<sup>2</sup> The feast-day of St. Michael: hence the 'Golfo de San Miguel'.

<sup>3</sup> The name Pacific was not used generally for another two centuries; and, since the Isthmus of Panama lies almost east and west, 'South Sea' was not a misnomer for the Pacific in this region.

hostile, was captured after giving trouble, and, with three of his chief men, torn to pieces by Vasco Nuñez' dogs; Bononiamá, judging a show of friendship to be judicious, presented gold to the value of 2,000 pesos; Bequebuca ran away, but sent gold gifts; Quoriso offered another great treasure, gold ornaments worth 14,000 pesos.

The village of Pocorosa was reached on 13 December 1513, and after a month's rest the Spanish forces attacked the recalcitrant Tubanamá, captured him, but gave him liberty in exchange for friendship and tribute. The party returned to the village of Panquiaco ragged and travel-worn, but not one Spaniard had died, although some were sick, including Vasco Nuñez. Nursed back to health by Panquiaco, the discoverer marched to Careta's town, re-embarked, and reached Santa Maria again on 19 January 1514, with 40,000 pesos in gold and 800 Indian slaves as booty.

Vasco Nuñez sent 200 of the best pearls to the King, and hoped for recognition. But his discovery had come too late. At the end of June a great fleet was sighted, and Pedro Arias de Avila sailed into the Gulf of Urabá. Pedrarias, as he is usually known, came with magnificent equipment, and 1,500 soldiers and colonists; Vasco Nuñez, with only two or three hundred men, had no chance of opposing him. He received his supplanters with courtesy, feasting them on game and fruits of the region, and bread of maize flour to supplement the Spanish rations of 'powdered flesh and salted fish'. No show of goodwill, however, was effective in the case of one member of Pedrarias' party, the lawyer Enciso, back with the important appointment of *alguazil mayor*; he never abated his grudge, bringing endless suits against Vasco Nuñez, and spurring Pedrarias to hostile actions. The *residencia* (examination of conduct during tenure of office) of Vasco Nuñez was taken with such severity that a great part of his fortune in gold and pearls was taken from him in fines and he was under arrest for some time. He found friends, however, among the newcomers; the wife of Pedrarias, Isabel de Bobadilla, to whose noble connexions was due much of the old tyrant's amazing immunity during his career in the New World, had a kindly eye for the discoverer of the Pacific; so had the first prelate of the Spanish Main, Bishop Quevedo; and another ally was Official Recorder of the expedition, Gonzalo Hernandez de Oviedo y Valdes, who was to spend thirty-four years in the 'Indies'. He held many important posts, including that of Inspector of the gold mines of Darien, and wrote the *Historia General de las Indias*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Other men destined to distinction who came with Pedrarias were Hernan de Soto, later the discoverer of the Mississippi and explorer of

Speedily short of food for his large expedition, Pedrarias began to send out a series of raiding parties that implanted in the hearts of the Darien folk a bitterness never forgotten. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa probably did not exaggerate when he said in his letter to the King of 16 October 1515 that the Indians, 'formerly like sheep, have now become as fierce as lions,' on account of evil treatment. There was not a single friendly tribe left but that of Careta, dwelling too near to the Spanish settlement to dare display hostility. The Spaniards felt themselves in a desperate situation; 600 men had died of disease in a few months, and food was scarce.

Enciso, raiding on the banks of the Cenu (Sinu), was defeated and driven back by the naked native folk. Gaspar de Morales, sent to the South Sea, followed the trail which Balboa had blazed, crossed to the Pearl Islands, was kindly received, collected immense quantities of gold and pearls, and, when he was about to leave, rewarded his hosts by burning their houses and gran-stores and making an attack on the native folk. Twenty chiefs are said to have been torn to pieces by the Spaniards' dogs, and a hundred women and young boys seized and taken away. Most of these were killed on the return journey when Morales found himself pursued by infuriated natives; one by one, the captives were killed and their bodies left on the path.

Ayora was commissioned to build a chain of forts across the isthmus, in the territory of Comogre and Pocorosa. But he tortured and burnt alive the natives who possessed gold, collected a large treasure, and, instead of returning with it to Santa Maria, sailed away to Spain. Hurtado was sent to seek him, but came back with bad news, ameliorated by the possession of a hundred natives, who were presented to officials of the colony. Even the good Bishop Quevedo accepted Indian slaves, perhaps putting his own interpretation on the paragraph in the will of Queen Isabella which urged the promotion of conversion to Christianity of the native American folk, and begged her husband and daughter 'never to consent that the Indians who dwell on these islands of Tierra Firme should receive any injury in their persons or goods, but to command that they be well and justly treated.'

Florida; Diego de Almagro, first European to enter Chile; Bernal Diaz del Castillo, afterwards with Cortés in the conquest of Mexico and author of an entrancing book; Pascual de Andagoya, conquistador and historian, and Sebastian de Benalcazar, leader of an extraordinary march from Quito to the plateau of Bogotá. Also in the fleet was young Vespucci, nephew of the great navigator, said by Peter Martyr to be a 'wittie young man', who had already made many voyages, and taken many notes, and was expert in mariners' lore.

Pascual de Andagoya says that 'the land suffered for a distance of more than a hundred leagues from Darien. All the people brought here, and there was a great multitude, were immediately sent to the old mines, for they were rich in that land; and as they came from great distance and were worn out and broken down by the great burdens they had to carry, and as the climate was different from their own, and unhealthy, they all died'.

Meneses, sent colonizing westward when Pedrarias began to doubt the possibility of a permanent Darien settlement, marched into Ocorosa's territory and founded a town called Santa Cruz half-way between Punta San Blas and Puerto Careta. The chiefs in this region were said by Vasco Nuñez, in his letter to the King of 20 January 1513, to keep gold in raised store-houses, like maize; the interior country, he said, was beautiful, with fine mountains, clear of forests except along the banks of rivers. But Santa Cruz was short-lived. Meneses was defeated in a battle with the Indians, and when he retired upon his new town the natives were sufficiently heartened to attack the diminished Spaniards. None survived. The town was burnt and no attempt made to rebuild the settlement.

The next attempt of Pedrarias to create a permanent Spanish outpost was at Acla, site of the camp of Vasco Nuñez and later visited by Gabriel de Rojas (1514); it remained for some years as the starting-point for expeditions across the isthmus. Drake, the seveneenth-century buccaneers (with Wafer among them), and the Scots colonists, were in turn to find this clean sandy reach the most attractive point of a coast chiefly hidden by mangrove swamps.

Another expedition eastward, to the Sinu country, in search of Dabaibe, failed, owing to the implacable temper of the native folk, and Pedrarias himself, elderly but enterprising, led his best troops from Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien only to suffer defeat. He came to the conclusion that it would be the best policy to transfer the main Spanish colony to the healthier, richer, and perhaps less hostile Pacific coast, maintaining contact with fleets from Spain by a defended road across the narrow isthmus. Gonzalo de Badajoz went seeking a site and reported better conditions in the sweep of Panama Bay; following the Alcalde Mayor, Espinosa made his famous crossing on a donkey, raided westward to Nata and Pariza, and founded the first Panama City in 1517. To this point Pedrarias considered moving his headquarters, as governor of Castilla del Oro. But first he wanted to know more about the Sea of the South and its coasts, and the best route for a transisthmian road. Vasco Nuñez, resentful of Pedrarias' authority, and almost openly working

to have the middle-aged courtier superseded, was at once an instrument and a menace; he had been appointed by the King of Spain, as belated reward for his discovery of the Pacific, Adelantado, with authority to pursue exploration work on the shores of the South Sea, but Pedrarias withheld the letter of appointment for some months, took an opportunity to accuse Vasco Nuñez of intrigue, and again shut him up in prison. The intervention of friends patched up the quarrel, and the discoverer regained his freedom when he agreed, as the result of an amicable plot between Bishop Juan de Quevedo and Isabel de Bobadilla, to marry Maria, daughter of Pedrarias—eldest of eight children left behind in Spain. The girl was in a Spanish convent, and never saw, or was seen by, Vasco Nuñez.

Set at liberty, Vasco Nuñez thought it discreet to leave Santa Maria at once for Acla and to prepare for South Sea exploration. Timbers for sea-going ships were cut in the nearby forest and transported across hill, forest, and gorge, to the Gulf of San Miguel; but when put together and launched the vessels were found useless, the wood riddled by insects. So the labour, chiefly performed by relays of Indians, was repeated on the Pacific side, at the Pearl Islands in Panama Bay. Vasco Nuñez went to and from Acla seven times, before the ships were ready, and was about to sail when a summons came from Pedrarias demanding his return. He obeyed, was met on the road by the Governor's envoys (including Francisco Pizarro), accused of conspiracy, arrested, and imprisoned in Acla. There, while jealous Pedrarias watched through the chinks of a cane hut, Vasco Nuñez was beheaded.

At Acla the majority of the Spanish colony in northern Darien was now established, and Santa Maria declined. The situation of the older city had, if Peter Martyr is correct, no attractions; he said that it had a pestiferous air, situated in a deep valley, shut in by high hills that reflected the sun. 'Muddie and stinking maryshes' lay all about Santa Maria, so that the dwellings were in a 'standing puddle'.

While Pedrarias debated between Acla and Nombre de Dios as new headquarters, information arrived that the Governor had been superseded by Lope de Sosa—chiefly through the instrumentality of Oviedo, who had returned to Spain. Pedrarias at once made plans to cross the Isthmus and to establish himself on the south shore, inviting colonists to accompany him. Formal foundation of Panama City by Pedrarias took place on 15 August 1519; soon afterwards 400 Spaniards were settled here, each with forty to ninety slaves, large land grants, and concessions for gold hunting. Half the gold was sent to Santa Maria, whose Cabildo was now under the sway

of Geronomite Fathers from Santo Domingo. This Council granted Diego Albites, old colleague of Vasco Nuñez, permission to raid and colonize on the north coast. Albites established himself at Nombre de Dios. A road wide enough for two carts to pass was cut almost straight across the Isthmus, and bridges and posthouses were built. Acla dwindled from this time, although the route from this good harbour was sometimes preferred: Gil Gonzalez de Avila, for instance, arriving from Spain at the end of 1521, sailed to Acla, took his ships' carpenters to the Chucunaque river, built boats, and descended to the Gulf of San Miguel *en route* for Panama City.

Pedrarias and the Cabildo of Santa Maria soon quarrelled; but the Governor sent his wife to Spain with trunks full of gold and jewels, and met intrigue with intrigue. When Lope de Sosa's flagship sailed into Darien harbour (May 1520) Pedrarias had travelled across the Isthmus to meet him; he went aboard, entered his supplanter's stately cabin, and presently emerged to announce that Lope de Sosa had been taken ill. And on board, without setting foot ashore, the new Governor of Castilla del Oro died. Pedrarias gave him a handsome funeral, treated the bereaved sons and new officials kindly, handed civic authority to Oviedo, who had returned with the post of official historian, among other appointments, and then went back to Panama. He sent no more gold to Santa Maria, thenceforth shipping the King's shares direct from Nombre de Dios. Oviedo tried to keep the moribund city alive; but in 1521 the Episcopal see was transferred to Panama, then created a City by royal decree. Two years later Oviedo was deposed by Pedrarias and returned to Spain; and Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien ceased to exist in September 1524 when Indians raided the weed-grown plaza, burnt everything that remained of Spanish building—church, cabildo-house, stocks and pen for prisoners—and killed the few settlers who still clung to the town. Among these was Diego Ribero, who had sailed with Columbus.

So ended Spanish colonization of the Urabá region, and, slowly, the remnant of the native folk drifted back. Panama City, on the south shore, grew steadily, first from the results of Pedrarias' raids to the westward and later from traffic with Ecuador and Peru. The road to Nombre de Dios was kept open, but apart from this terminal and a few small gold-washing towns west of the Chagre (as Concepción de Veragua), the native folk retained their ancient hunting-grounds. Pedrarias, hoary but indefatigable, scouted along the Pacific coast west and north of Panama Bay, into Chiriquí and beyond; in 1526 he organized a great expedition to Nicaragua, took



all available soldiers and settlers from Acla and Nombre de Dios, borrowed money and goods from residents of Panama City (selling his share in Pizarro's enterprise to Peru for 1,000 gold pesos) and seized thousands of Indians as slaves. Eventually, he was made Governor of Nicaragua, in 1528, while Pedro de los Rios assumed his place in Panama City as head of Castilla del Oro, proving no more gentle with native folk than his predecessors.<sup>1</sup> Their ill treatment was expressly forbidden by new orders from Spain, probably as the result of representations by Father Bartolomé de las Casas, or such wise officials as Oviedo. Spaniards were ordered to barter for, not to seize, native stores; Negroes were not to accompany expeditions; branding of natives was forbidden, except in the case of proved criminals. Nevertheless, Panama City quickly became a market for Indian (chiefly Chocó) slaves, as well as for the more expensive imported Africans.

A certain amount of mingling between Negroes and the Chocó of the Pacific border and river banks developed when runaway Africans took to the bush, escaping not only from Panama City but from the sugar plantations, farms for breeding black cattle, timber camps and saw-mills, prospering along the coast between Panama and Peru. In the region of the Gulf of San Miguel gold-washing became profitable before the middle of the sixteenth century. Deserting and hiding in the broken and wooded interior, the escaped Negroes and half-bloods presently formed a special community, and the Cimarones (Cimmeroons, Maroons) readily offered help to raiding foreigners. Their favourite haunts lay along the courses of the Chepo, Savana, Lara, and their tributaries; it was they who aided Drake and Oxenham, and although their chief strongholds were found and broken up by the exasperated Spaniards, and the Cimarones forbidden to live outside definite town limits such as those of Chepo and Yavisa towns, the idea that the Spaniard might be harassed by encouraging other Europeans was already implanted in Darien. This seed, nurtured in the communities of native folk, was to bear its most prolific fruit in Wafer's day.

Piracy on the high seas, preying upon Spanish vessels loaded with fine merchandise from Europe or treasure from the New World, became a serious menace after the discovery of Peru and the development of mines in Mexico and Colombia; to check these losses, Spain made obligatory in 1561 the convoyed fleet system, by which

<sup>1</sup> Pedrarias died in Leon at the age of ninety. Oviedo, whose calculations may have been affected by his feelings, says that the old Governor was responsible for the death of two million natives.

definite annual sailings were established; the celebrated Fairs of Cartagena and Porto Bello concentrated the movements of traffic on distinct routes and within definite periods. Gradually, except for this official terminal, the whole of the coast of northern Darien was neglected by Spain, and the position of non-Spanish Europeans in the Caribbean was thereby not only encouraged, but recognised by a succession of treaties. It was only, however, during the brief life of the South Sea Company (1713-20) whose ships brought Negroes and goods, that English factors were permitted to reside and trade in Porto Bello and Cartagena, as in Vera Cruz, Havana, and Buenos Aires.

But while Spain, especially after the beginning of the weak rule of Carlos II, reconciled herself to foreign occupation of small islands and outlying parts of the mainland, the great treasure-houses of Mexico and Peru remained carefully guarded and intact; and in order that these two chief sources of wealth should be secure, the connecting narrow regions of Central America, and in particular the Isthmus of Panama, were necessarily held inviolate. For this reason Spain did her best to exclude strangers from the Isthmian highway; and for this reason the exploits of Sharp and Davis, to which Wafer was witness, resounded through the maritime world. It was not until Spain abolished, in 1748, the system of annual visits of trading fleets protected by armed convoys—thenceforth registering merchantmen for the voyage round the Horn—that the 'Isthmus of America' lost its paramount importance.



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<sup>1</sup> A reference in an edition of Dampier's *Voyages* published in London in 1906, to Add. MSS. 33054, speaks of a manuscript, written by Wafer, as being preserved in that volume. Search for the documents has, however, proved unavailing.

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